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Map  
OF  
**ARABIA.**  
Drawn for the  
MODERN TRAVELLER.  
Pentelton's Lithog. Boston.  
English Miles  
50 100 150 200 250 300

40 Longitude East from Greenwich 45



THE  
MODERN TRAVELLER.

A

POPULAR DESCRIPTION,  
GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL,  
OF THE  
VARIOUS COUNTRIES OF THE GLOBE.

VOL. IX.

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ARABIA.

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BOSTON :  
LILLY AND WAIT (LATE WELLS & LILLY).  
AND THOMAS WARDLE, PHILADELPHIA.

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1831.



# CONTENTS.

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	Page
BOUNDARIES of Arabia,	1
Etymology of the name,	ib
Ancient and modern divisions,	3
Provincial distribution,	4
Physical geography,	7
Natural history,	14
History of Arabia,	20
Peninsula of Mount Sinai,	105
Convent of Mount Sinai,	129
From the convent to the gulf of Akaba,	196
Voyage down the Red Sea,	207
Djidda,	212
Mekka,	220
Description of the temple,	222
Description of the city,	239
Character and costume of the population,	249
Pilgrimage to Mount Arafat,	256
Description of a Hadji caravan,	267
Medinah,	270
Boundaries of the Holy Land,	271
Voyage from Djidda to Loheia,	278
Route from Loheia to Beit El Fakih,	280
From Beit El Fakih to Djobla,	285

	Page
From Beit El Fakih to Mocha,	288
Aden,	289
Mocha,	292
From Mocha to Sanaa,	311
Sanaa,	319
Coast of Omaun,	327
Petra,	329

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#### DIRECTIONS FOR PLACING THE PLATES.

<i>Map of Arabia,</i>	<i>to face the Title.</i>
<i>View of Mount Sinai,</i>	129
<i>Mosques at Mekka and Medinah,</i>	224
<i>View of Moosa,</i>	310

A

## POPULAR DESCRIPTION,

GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL,

OF

## ARABIA.

[ A peninsula forming the south-western extremity of Asia, lying between lat.  $12^{\circ}$  and  $35^{\circ}$  N., long.  $36^{\circ}$  and  $61^{\circ}$  E.; bounded on the N. by Syria and the Euphrates; on the E. by the Persian Gulf; on the S. by the Arabian Sea, or Indian Ocean; on the W. by the Red Sea.]

ARABIA is one of those countries which belong to sacred geography. It is the land of Ishmael, — the country of the Edomites, the Amalekites, and the Midianites, — the scene of those wonderful transactions which immediately followed the exodus of Israel. Mount Sinai and Mount Nebo rank among its mountains, and the Red Sea, the Jordan, and the Euphrates form its western and northern boundaries. Combined with these sacred associations, others of a romantic kind attach to the name of this almost unknown country. For if, as the native land of the Arabian Impostor, it has no claims on the veneration of the Christian, to his successors in the khalifate, literature and science were greatly indebted; and the link between ancient literature and the revival of letters was supplied by Arabian learning.



The word Arabia is of doubtful etymology. The most probable conjecture is that which derives it from the Hebrew *orebeh*, a wilderness or desert,\* in which case Mount Horeb might seem to have given its name to the country; or it may be understood as simply denoting the desert mountain. The Arabians, then, are the inhabitants of the desert, the pastoral hordes of the wilderness. This etymology may be thought to receive some support from the coincident import of the word Saracen, under which name the Arabian tribes from Mecca to the Euphrates were confounded by the Greeks and Romans.† One of the many words in Arabic signifying a desert, is *zahra*,‡ from which the appellative Saracen (ἡ Σαρακενικὰ φυλὴ) has probably been formed.§ The Turks and the Persians

\* Schleusner gives the preference to this etymology. Bochart supposes it to be derived from *areb*, the west, *i. e.* of the Euphrates, and that the country received that name from the Assyrians. But this is unlikely, as Arabia would rather have been described as the south, which is actually the import of the modern appellative *yemen*. Pococke adopts the notion of its being so named from Yarab, the son of the patriarch Joktan, the supposed founder of the kingdom of Yemen.

† See authorities in Gibbon, vol. vii, c. 50.

‡ *Kafr*, *mikfar*, *smlis*, *mahk*, and *habaucer*, are all used to imply a naked desert covered with sand; *tanufah* denotes a steppe or plain covered with herbage; *zahra* is either a naked desert or a savanna.—See HUMBOLDT'S *Pers. Narr.* vol. iv, p. 315.

§ Others have derived it, Gibbon says, ‘ridiculously, from Sarah, the wife of Abraham; obscurely, from the village of Saraka; more plausibly, from Arabic words signifying a thievish character and an Oriental situation. ‘The last and most popular of these etymologies,’ (the one adopted by Sale, from *shark*, the east,) ‘is refuted by Ptolemy, who expressly remarks their western and southern position.’ Mr Charles Mills, in his *History of Muhammedism*, says: ‘Of the various definitions of the word Saracen, I prefer the Arabic word *Saraini*, which means a pastoral people. The corruption from *Saraini* to *Saracini* can be easily imagined.’

call the whole country *Arabistân*, the country of the Arabs; a name recognised by the natives themselves, who are divided into two grand classes, *Al Aarub ahl el hudar*, or *ahl al madar* (clay), *i. e.* the dwellers in towns, and *Al Aarub ahl al Bedow*, or *Bedowecoon*, or *ahl al wibar*, *i. e.* dwellers in tents. By the oriental geographers, the northern part of Arabia Petræa is included in the *Bar-el-Sham* (the country on the left), or Syria; while the tract of land comprehended by the Greeks under the name of Arabia Felix, is called *Bar-el-Yemen*, the country on the right or south. This has by some writers been denominated Arabia Proper. Roman Arabia, or *Arabia Provincia*, the kingdom of Aretas, which had for its capital Bostra, and included at one time Damascus, comprised that tract of country now called the Ledja and the Haouran, the ancient Batanea and Auranitis:\* it is now included in the pashalic of Damascus.

Ptolemy was the first geographer who divided the peninsula into the well-known regions of Arabia Deserta, Arabia Petræa, and Arabia Felix. Desert Arabia extended on the north and east as far as the Euphrates, which separated it from Mesopotamia, or Arabian Irâk: its chief city was Palmyra. Arabia Petræa was so named from Petra its capital: it comprehended the tract of country south of the Dead Sea, between Palestine and Egypt, at the northern extremity of the Red Sea. Arabia Felix designated the remainder. This division, however, is vague and arbitrary, and will be of little use in laying down the modern geography of the country. The first of these Arabias was the country of the ancient Nabatheans and the people of Kedar, answering to

(p. 28.) Is it not probable, that *Saraini*, or *Zaraini*, is itself formed from *zahra*, *εἰρημός* — a pastoral wilderness?

\* See Mod. Trav., Syria, vol. ii, p. 85.

the modern Bedoweens;\* the second was peopled by the Amalekites, the Cushites, the Moabites, and the Ammonites; the third is supposed to be the *Sheba* of Scripture.† The kings of Arabia are mentioned as having brought gold and silver to King Solomon, and the Arabians paid an annual tribute of 7,700 sheep and as many goats to Jehoshaphat.‡ The latter was evidently the tribute of a pastoral nation, — probably of the Bedoweens inhabiting the country east of the Jordan and bordering on the kingdom of Judah. The precious metals must have been supplied by a commercial people; and accordingly, we find these kings of Arabia mentioned together with the merchantmen (or collectors) and the spice-merchants, as furnishing the gold, which appears to have been obtained partly in the shape of duties on traffic, partly as a contribution from the provincial governors and tributary chieftains. This Arabia, therefore, doubtless bordered on the Red Sea.

Arabia Proper is distributed by the oriental writers into five provinces, as, in the time of Strabo, it was divided into five kingdoms: these provinces are, Yemen, Hedjaz, Tehâma, Nedjed, and Yamâma, to which some add Bahrein as a sixth.§ Niebuhr divides Arabia into, 1. the country of Yemen; 2. the country of Hadramaut; 3. the country of Omân; 4. the independent states on the borders of the Persian Gulf; 5. the country of Lachsa, or Hadjar; 6. the province of Nedjed; 7. the province of Hedjaz; and, 8. the desert of Mount Sinai. In this division, Tehâma, the flat country extending along

\* It is clear from Isaiah xiii, 20, and Ezek. xxvii, 21, that the Arabians of Scripture were dwellers in tents, and that they extended to the borders of Babylon.

† Ezek. xxvii, 23.

‡ 1 Kings, x, 15. 2 Chron. ix, 14; xvii, 11.

§ Sale's Koran, *prel. disc.* § 1.

the coast between Mecca and Aden, which is reckoned by the ancient geographers as a separate province, is included in the *Ard el Yemen*; while Hadramaut and Omân, which they include in Yemen, are made distinct provinces. The fact is, that the Arabian peninsula, being parcelled out into various independent territories, has at no time formed, strictly speaking, one kingdom, and, therefore, has never been divided into distinct provinces. Certain grand natural divisions may be laid down; but these convey no correct notion of the political or territorial arrangement.\* The following may be considered as an approximation to a correct geographical division of the country: —

#### I. MARITIME DISTRICTS.

##### *On the coast of the Red Sea.*

- 1 Hedjaz: the holy land of the Moslems, nominally subject to the Porte, under the jurisdiction of the Pasha of Djidda.
2. Teh ma: subject for the most part to the Imaum of Sanaa; chief places, Mocha and Aden.†

\* Malte Brun professedly follows Niebuhr in dividing Arabia into Nedjed, Hedjaz, Yemen, Hadramaut, Oman, and Lachsa; but, according to the learned Traveller, a considerable tract of country is not included in those provinces.

† The Tehama of Yemen (the Yemen of our maps) is described as extending along the western coast almost from Mecca to Aden. (*Sale*, vol. i, p. 6.) It is also called *Gaur* from its low situation. Niebuhr includes it in the *Ard el Yemen*, we think improperly: he might as well have included Hadramaut, which, together with Yemen and Tehama, composed the ancient Arabia Felix. Of the fourteen subdivisions of Yemen which he enumerates, we have omitted three as comprised in Tehama; viz, the sheikhdome of Aden, the territory of Abu Arisch, and the district between Abu Arisch and Hedjaz, inhabited by Bedoween robbers.

*On the coast of the Arabian Sea.*

3. Hadramaut: governed by independent sheikhs.\*
4. Omaun: divided among several petty sovereigns, of whom the chief is the Imaum of Mascat.

*On the coast of the Persian Gulf.*

5. Lachsa, (El Ah'sa,) or Hadjar, including Bahhreïn:† formerly subject to the Porte; now governed by the reigning sheikh of the *Beni Khâled*, whose capital is Lachsa.

## II. INLAND DISTRICTS.

6. El Arud, or Nedjed-el-arud, comprising Aijana, the birth-place of Abd-el-Wahheb.
7. El Kherdje, or Yemaumah (Yemama, Imama)‡.
8. El Nedjed, comprehending the greater part of Arabia Deserta.
9. Yemen Proper, including,
  - (1.) The dominions of the Imaum of Sanaa.
  - (2.) The canton of Sahaun, governed by independent sheikhs; the chief is the Imaum of Saade'§

\* In this province are included the mountainous country called Seger (Sheh'r) celebrated for its producing frankincense; Mahrah, a large hilly district; and part of Jafa.

† The name Bahhreïn (two seas) has been erroneously transferred to the Isle of Aual and the other smaller islands in the Persian Gulf off the coast of Hadjar. The Arabian writers evidently employ the term to denote a district of the continent bordering on yemaumah. Niebuhr says, it denotes the part bordering on the Gulf. — See Niebuhr, p. 293; Price's Essay towards the Hist. of Arabia, p. 110; Sale's Koran, p. 2.

‡ The province of Yemama is stated by Golius (*apud* Sale) to be called also Arud, from its oblique situation in respect of Yemen; but this must be an error, as the city of Yemama is in El Kherdje, which Niebuhr erroneously places in the S.W. part of the Nedjed. Yemama is celebrated as the residence of the prophet Moseilama, the rival of Mahommed. It forms, with the cities of Lachsa and Djebrin, an equilateral triangle, of which each side is a three days' journey.

§ Three days E.N.E. of Saade is the city and sheikhdom of Nedjeran, and, three days further north, on the road to Mek-



- (3.) The country of Djof, including the ancient Mareb, or Mariaba, the capital of the Sabeans: it is divided among the Bedoweens, the Shereefs, and various petty Arab sultans.\*
- (4.) The principality of the Sultan (or Seid) of Kaukeban.
- (5.) Bellad el Kobail, or the country of Haschid u Bekil, governed by various independent sheikhs.
- (6.) The small territory of Nehhm.
- (7.) The small territory of Khaulan (Havilah).
- (8.) Ard el Jafa, or Yafa: formerly subject to the Imaum of Sanaa; now shared by three petty princes.†

The whole peninsula, Niebuhr says, may be considered as an immense pile of mountains, encircled with a belt of flat, arid, sandy ground. This belt, to the

ka, the sheikhdом of Kachtan; both of them enumerated by Niebuhr as separate districts of the Ard el Yemen; but they seem properly to belong to Sahaun. Nedjeran was formerly subject to the Imaum of Saade.

\* The country of Djof (or Djof-er-Szyrrhan) is divided into *Bellâdel Bedoui*, *Bellâd es Saladin*, and *Bellâd es Scheraf*. The second of these denominations designates the territory of the petty Arab sultans, or independent chieftains of the mountains. The *Bellâd es Scheraf* denotes the towns and villages governed by the descendants of Mahommed.

† Niebuhr makes fourteen territorial subdivisions; viz, the eight above enumerated, three comprised in the Tehama, two which we have included in Sahaun, and a small district called Khaulan, between Sanaa and Mekka, which does not appear to have any claim to be considered as a distinct subdivision. In fact, there is no end to subdivisions, if the territories of every village sheikh who stands up for independence, are to be reckoned as a separate province. Southey has happily seized the leading features of the country in the following lines:

‘ Now go thy way, Abdaldar!

Servant of Eblis,

Over Arabia

Seek the Destroyer!

Over the sands of the scorching Tehama,

Over the waterless mountains of Nayd;

In Arud pursue him, and Yemen the happy,

And Hejaz, the country beloved by believers.’

*Thalaba*, book ii, stanza 27.

whole of which he gives the name of the *Tehâma*, begins at Suez, and extends round the whole peninsula to the mouth of the Euphrates, being formed, towards the north, by the Syrian desert and Arabia Petræa. Its breadth varies: that of the plain adjacent to the Red Sea, is generally about two days' journey from the sea-shore to the rise of the hills. It bears every mark of having been anciently a part of the bed of the sea. The bottom is a grayish clay with a large proportion of sand, interspersed with marine exuvæ to a great distance from the sea-shore. It contains large strata of salt, which in some places even rise up into hills. Its regular inclination towards the sea indicates that it has emerged gradually. The small eminences upon the confines of this plain, are composed of calcareous stone of a blackish appearance, as if burnt by the sun. The adjoining hills contain schistus and basalt. The sea on this coast continues to recede, and the *Tehâma* is on that side gradually extending its limits. The banks of coral are also increasing and coming nearer the shore, so as to render the navigation of the gulf more and more dangerous.\* The sand gradually fills up the intermediate space, and joins these beds of coral to the continent; but these newly formed lands are ungrateful and barren, and, unlike the new ground formed by rivers, promise no advantage, being unsuceptible of cultivation.

The principal chain of mountains runs nearly parallel with the Red Sea, at a distance of from thirty to eighty miles. It increases in elevation as it extends southward, and sends out a branch in a line

\* These immense banks of coral, which almost fill up the Arabian Gulf, rise in some places ten fathoms above the sea. They are soft under the waters, and, being easily wrought, are preferred to all other stones for building materials. Great part of the houses in the *Tehama*. Niebuhr says, are built of coral rock.

parallel to the shore of the Arabian Sea, as far as Omaun, terminating in the point called *Ras al Had*. From this point to the *Ras Mussendom*, the coast of Omaun is mountainous, and the Tehâma disappears, except for about a day's journey between the village of Sib and the town of Sohar. The Persian Gulf is described as a prolongation of the banks of the Euphrates. In several parts, particularly near the islands of Bahrein, fresh water springs rise in the middle of the salt water.\* At the mouths of the Euphrates, the alluvial depositions were very perceptible so far back as the time of Pliny: the direction of its basin, forming the great plain of Chaldea and Mesopotamia, is the same as that of the gulf in which it terminates.

The interior of Arabia is believed to be an elevated table-land, declining towards the Persian Gulf. A large proportion of it is occupied by a series of deserts; but these deserts are separated by small mountainous oûses, which seem to form a continued line from the S.E. of Palestine to Omaun. That part of the interior plateau which is particularly known by the name of Nedjed,† is a mountainous district, covered, Niebuhr states, with towns and villages; and almost every town has its independent sheikh. It abounds in all sorts of fruits, particularly dates; but there are few rivers: that of Astan, laid down in D'Anville's map, is only a *wadi*, or mountain-torrent, which is the character of all the Arabian rivers, few of which reach the sea.‡ A Turkish geographer, however, states, that the Nedjed contains some lakes, and Strabo mentions lakes that are

\* The same phenomenon is seen in the Bay of Xagua and at the mouth of the *Rio de los Lagartos* off Yucatan. — See MOD. TRAV., *Mexico*, vol. ii, p. 150.

† Nedjed, or Najd, signifies, according to Sale, 'a rising country,' i. e. highlands.

‡ The Red Sea receives no river: some small ones find their way to the Persian Gulf.

formed by rivers.\* This is the country of the Wahabites. Nedjed el Arud appears to be a ridge of limestone rocks, extending from north to south, of abrupt form on the west, but gently declining towards the east. It is the *Montes Marithi* of Ptolemy. To the south and south-east, Nedjed is said to be separated from Yemen and Omaun by the desert of Alikaf, 'which, according to tradition, was once a terrestrial paradise, inhabited by an impious race of giants, called Aadites, who were destroyed by a deluge of sand.'†

The position of these mountains in the middle of a peninsula, occasions a phenomenon similar to what is observable in the Indian peninsula, which is in the same manner intersected by mountains. The rainy seasons are here singularly diversified. Westward, in Yemen, from the month of June to the middle or end of September, the mountains are watered by regular showers; but even then, the sky is seldom overcast for twenty-four hours together. As, during these months, the heat is the greatest, these rains are invaluable. During the remainder of the year, scarcely a cloud is to be seen. In the eastern part of the mountains, towards Mascat, the rains fall between the middle of November and the middle of February; while in Hadramaut and Omaun, the rainy season commences in the middle of February, and lasts till the middle of April. Thus it should seem, that the rains make the tour of the peninsula every season, as impelled by the prevalent winds. In the Tehâna, a whole year sometimes passes without rain, and the drought is so extreme, that the mountain torrents are lost in the sands before they can reach the sea. These streams, however, when swelled by the rains which fall in the mountains, afford the means of fertilising the lands by irri-

\* Malte Brun, vol. ii, p. 193.

† Ibid, p. 206

gation, which otherwise would be wholly barren. It is obvious, that, by being thus drained off from their channels, and diffused over a wide surface in a tropical climate, rivers, which might otherwise be considerable, would lose themselves by evaporation. Niebuhr was informed, however, that there is a spring rain which falls for a short season in the Tehâma, the period of which is uncertain, but on which the success of the harvest greatly depends. These regular rains render the valleys lying among the mountains both fertile and delightful.\*

In the Tehâma, the heat, during the summer season, is intense: at Mocha, the thermometer rises, in July and August, to 98° of Fahrenheit, while at Sanaa, in the mountains, it only reaches 85°. In the latter district, it sometimes freezes, though rarely; and falls of snow take place in the interior, but the snow never lies long on the ground. The nature of the winds differs according to the tract which they have passed over, so that the same wind, in different places, is dry and moist. On the shores of the Persian Gulf, the south-east wind, which comes charged with moisture, is said to occasion violent perspiration, and on that account is deemed more disagreeable than the north-west, which is more torrid, and heats metals in the shade. \* Water placed in jars exposed to the current of this hot wind, is rendered very cool by the effect of the sudden evaporation; but both men and animals are often suffocated by the blasts. The much dreaded *Semoum* or *Samiel*, however, seldom blows

\* The rainy season in Yemen, which lasts during the months Tamuz, Ab, and Ailul (June—Sep.), is called *Mattar el Kharif*. The spring rain, which falls in the month Nisan (March—April), is called the *Mattar es Seif*, and answers to the *Malkosh* (the spring or latter rain) of the Hebrews, for which it was customary to pray in the month Nisan, as preparing the grain for the harvest.—See *Deut.* xi, 14. *Zech.* x, 1.



within Arabia, though frequently on its frontiers. It is in the desert bounded by Bassora, Bagdadt, Aleppo, and Mekka, that it is most dreaded. It blows only during the intense summer heats. The Arabs of the desert, being accustomed to an atmosphere of great purity, are said to perceive its approach by its sulphurous odour, and by an unusual redness in the quarter of the atmosphere whence it proceeds. The only means of escaping from one of these poisonous blasts, is to lie flat on the ground, till it has passed over, as they always move at a certain height in the atmosphere: instinct teaches even animals to bow down their heads to the ground. The effects of the semoom on any who are rash enough to face it, are, instant suffocation, and the immediate putrefaction of the corpse, which is observed to be greatly swollen.

‘The Arabs of the desert,’ says Volney, ‘call these winds *Semoum*, or poison, and the Turks *Shamyela*, or wind of Syria, from which is formed the *Samiel*. Their heat is sometimes so excessive, that it is difficult to form any idea of its violence without having experienced it; but it may be compared to the heat of a large oven at the moment of drawing out the bread. When these winds begin to blow, the atmosphere assumes an alarming aspect. The sky, at other times so clear in this climate, becomes dark and heavy; the sun loses his splendour, and appears of a violet colour. The air is not cloudy, but gray and thick, and is in fact filled with an extremely subtle dust, which penetrates every where. This wind, always light and rapid, is not at first remarkably hot, but it increases in heat in proportion as it continues. All animated bodies soon discover it, by the change it produces in them. The lungs, which a too rarefied air no longer expands, are contracted, and become painful. Respiration is short and difficult, the skin parched and dry, and the body consumed by an in-

ternal heat. In vain is recourse had to large draughts of water; nothing can restore perspiration. In vain is coolness sought for; all bodies in which it is usual to find it, deceive the hand that touches them. Marble, iron, water, notwithstanding the sun no longer appears, are hot. The streets are deserted, and the dead silence of night reigns every where. The inhabitants of houses and villages shut themselves up in their houses, and those of the desert in their tents, or in pits they dig in the earth, where they wait the termination of this destructive heat. It usually lasts three days; but, if it exceeds that time, it becomes insupportable. Wo to the traveller whom this wind surprises remote from shelter! he must suffer all its dreadful consequences, which sometimes are mortal. The danger is most imminent when it blows in squalls, for then the rapidity of the wind increases the heat to such a degree as to cause sudden death. This death is a real suffocation; the lungs, being empty, are convulsed, the circulation disordered, and the whole mass of blood driven by the heart towards the head and breast; whence that hæmorrhage at the nose and mouth which happens after death. This wind is especially fatal to persons of a plethoric habit, and those in whom fatigue has destroyed the tone of the muscles and the vessels. The corpse remains a long time warm, swells, turns blue, and is easily separated; all which are signs of that putrid fermentation which takes place in animal bodies when the humours become stagnant. These accidents are to be avoided by stopping the nose and mouth with handkerchiefs. An efficacious method likewise is that practised by the camels, who bury their noses in the sand, and keep them there till the squall is over.

‘Another quality of this wind is its extreme aridity; which is such, that water sprinkled on the floor, evaporates in a few minutes. By this extreme

dryness, it withers and strips all the plants; and by exhaling too suddenly the emanations from animal bodies, crisps the skin, closes the pores, and causes that feverish heat which is the invariable effect of suppressed perspiration.\*

In the most arid tracts near the sea, the dews are singularly copious, notwithstanding which, the natives sleep in the open air; and Niebuhr says, he never slept more soundly than where he found his bed all wet with dew in the morning. In some places, however, this practice is dangerous.

#### NATURAL HISTORY.

‘There are some groves or thickets on the mountains of Arabia,’ says M. Malte Brun, ‘but no forests, properly so called, are to be found.’ It may be doubted whether our knowledge of the country is sufficiently complete to justify this statement. Niebuhr speaks of forests in the south of Arabia, which abound with thousands of monkeys without tails. The country is rich, he says, in indigenous trees; and forests are to be seen in the high lands, though they are rare. Among other trees, the following are either indigenous, or have been introduced, Niebuhr supposes, from India: the Indian fig-tree (*figus varia*), the date-tree, the cocoa-palm, and the fan-leaved palm, with other native varieties of both the palm and the fig-tree; the corneil-tree; the plantain or banana (*musa*); the almond-tree; the apricot-tree; the pear-tree; the apple-tree; the quince-tree; the orange-tree; the *acacia vera*, from which the gum arabic is obtained; the mangoustan (*mangifera*); the papaya (*p. carica*); the sensitive plant, and other mimosas; the balsam-tree (*amyris opobalsamum*); and the tamarind.\* The cedar is

\* Niebuhr gives the following names of undescribed trees:

not found in Arabia, and there is little timber fit for building, the trees being mostly of a light, porous texture. Among the shrubs may also be enumerated, the coffee-plant, the indigo-shrub, the castor-oil plant (*ricinus communis*), the senna, the aloe, the styrax, the sesamum (which supplies the place of the olive), the cotton-tree, the sugar-cane, the betel, the nutmeg, all sorts of melons and pumpions, the *ouars*, which yields a yellow dye, the *foua*, which supplies a red dye, and a great variety of leguminous plants, pot-herbs, and officinal herbs. Among the odoriferous plants are lavender, marjoram, the white lily, the globe amaranth (*gomphræna globosa*), the sea-daffodil (*pancratium maritimum*), various species of the pink, the *ocymum*, a beautiful species of basilic, the *imula*, a very odōriferous species of elicampane, the *cacalia*, the *dianthera*, the *moscharia* (so named by Forskal on account of its musky smell—it is found in the desert), the *ipomæa* (a plant of Indian origin resembling the rope-weed); and a beautiful species of hibiscus. Wheat, Turkey corn, and dhourra, cover the plains of Yemen and some other fertile places; the horses are fed on barley, and the asses on beans.

Arabia is the original country of the horse,\* the

the *elcaya*, the *keura*, (both famous for their perfume,) the *chadara*, the *antura*, the *culhamia*, the *catha* (the buds of which are chewed), the *oliban* (frankincense tree), the *tomex*, the *noemam*, the *gharib el baik*, the *segleg*, the *bæka*, and the *anas*.

\* Of the Arabian horse, there are two distinct breeds, the *kadishi* and the *koshlani*. The former are in no higher estimation than European horses, and are employed as beasts of burden. The latter are reserved for riding only. They are considered as sprung from the breed of Solomon, and a written genealogy of the breed has been preserved for 2,000 years. The greatest care is taken to secure the purity of the race. The best are bred by the Bedoweens in the northern desert. The *koshlani* are neither large nor handsome, but

camel,\* and the wild ass.† There is a race of oxen with a hump on the back like those of Syria. The rock-goat inhabits the lofty hills of Arabia Petræa, and the plains are stocked with gazelles. There is a breed of sheep with broad, thick tails, but their wool is said to be coarse, and their flesh far from delicate. The fierce and solitary hyæna inhabits the caverns of the desert mountains, and is common on the shores of the Persian Gulf, where, marching out at night, it has been known to carry off children from beside their parents, while sleeping in the open air. Among the other carnivorous animals, are the *nemer* or panther (*felis pardus*), the *fath* or ounce, the jackal (properly *tschakal*, called by the Arabians *el vâri*), wolves, foxes, and wild boars. The hare is seen in some mountainous parts; the sandy tracks abound with the jerboa (*mus jaculus*); and troops of mon-

amazingly swift, and capable of sustaining great fatigue; they can pass entire days without food, and make an impetuous charge on an enemy. The Turks hold this noble breed in little estimation, preferring larger and more showy horses.

\* There are several species. Those of Yemen are small, and of a light brown colour: those from Nedjed are dark brown, large, and lubberly. The Arabian camel (*djammel*) is distinguished from the Bactrian species (*bâcht*) by having only one hump. The dromedary (*hadjin*, called *droma*, the runner, by the Greeks) varies from the camel, not in species, but in breed: it is of a light and slender frame, and swifter than the horse. A dromedary bears the same relation to a camel that a hunter does to a race-horse. *Djammel* is used as a generic term: *hadjin* always denotes a particular species.

† There are two sorts of ass also in Arabia. The larger and more spirited breed are highly valued. In Yemen, the soldiers perform their patrols on asses, and every military service in which parade is not an object. Niebuhr thought them fitter for a journey than horses. He reckons the progress which they make in half an hour at 1,750 paces, double the pace of a man. The larger camels make 775 paces, and the smaller ones 500.



keys inhabit the hills of Aden, and the forests in the south of the peninsula.

Eagles, falcons, and sparrow-hawks are among the birds of prey; but the most serviceable is the carrion vulture (*vultur petenopterus*), which, besides clearing the earth of all carcases, and sharing with the dog, in most eastern cities, the indispensable office of scavenger, here befriends the peasant by destroying the field-mice, which would otherwise, in some provinces, render the labours of the husbandman wholly abortive. The performance of these important services induced the ancient Egyptians to place this bird in their pantheon; and it is still held unlawful to kill them. A degree of respect bordering on adoration is paid to the *samarmar* or *samarmog*,\* a species of thrush (*turdus Seleucus*) which annually visits Arabia from eastern Persia in pursuit of the locust, and destroys immense numbers of those formidable enemies to vegetation. The *ashjal* is valued for two beautiful feathers in its tail, to preserve which uninjured, the bird is said to leave a hole in its nest.† The *thaer el hind* is a rare bird, which fetches a high price on account of its golden plumage: it is a bird of passage, supposed to come from India. The *thaer es-djammel*,

\* This is its name at Mosul and Aleppo. It is elsewhere called the *abmelec*.

† Such was the statement given to M. Forskal, Niebuhr's companion, but he did not see the bird. A similar account is given of the *quetzal* by Juarros, in his History of Guatemala. The plumage of the bird is of an exquisite emerald colour. The tail feathers, which are very long, are favourite ornaments with the Indians, as those of the *ashjal* are with the Arabians; and 'the birds themselves, as if they knew the high estimation their feathers are held in, build their nests with two openings, that, by entering at one, and quitting them by the other, their plumes may not be deranged.' — MOD. TRAV., Mexico, vol. ii, p. 289. Both of these birds are probably species of the genus *pica paradisæa*, or bird of paradise.

or eamel-bird, is the name given to the ostrich, which is found in the deserts. The *hudhud*, a beautiful species of lapwing, is common on the shores of the Persian Gulf; and there is a tradition current among some of the natives, that its language may be understood. Tame fowls are very plentiful in the fertile districts. The woods of Yemen abound with the pheasant, the *pintando* or guinea-fowl, and the wood-pigeon. In the plains are to be seen the gray partridge, the common lark, and a white crane, with the under part of its belly of a beautiful red. A beautiful variety of the plover, and sometimes the stork, are seen in places which have water; and pelicans and other sea-fowls are numerous on the coasts of the Red Sea. Niebuhr says, he heard much talk of two species of birds which are highly valued by the Arabians, called the *salva* and the *sumana*. The former, he understood to be a bird of passage of the rail species: as to quails, he could obtain no evidence of their being birds of passage. The fact is, that the *salva* (in Hebrew *selav*) is the quail; and the *sumana* is either the same bird, or of the same genus. That the quail is a bird of passage, is indubitable.

All the coasts abound with fish. Niebuhr states, that he never met with the turtle, but the land-tortoise is so common, that the peasants bring cart-loads of it to the markets of several towns: it forms the chief food of the Christians during Lent and other fasts. On the southern coast of the Persian Gulf, all the domestic animals are fed chiefly on fish, and the hyæna is sometimes obliged to content himself with the same food. The flying fish is found in the Red Sea, together with a great variety of undescribed species, including a peculiar genus of torpedo. All Arabians eat locusts: the Turks, on the contrary, have an aversion to this food. The *muken*, or red locust, is preferred as the fattest and most delicate species. The *dubbe*, another species, is not deemed

esculent, because it tends to produce diarrhœa. The flesh of the locust is said to resemble the small sardine of the Baltic.\*

There are several sorts of serpents in Arabia; but the only one that is much dreaded, is a small slender species called the *baetan*, spotted black and white, the bite of which is said to be instantly fatal. There is a species of flying or leaping serpent which, by means of its elastic tail, springs from branch to branch of a tree till it reaches the top. Of the various sorts of lizard, the *guaril* is said to equal the crocodile in strength; and the species called *jekko* by the Egyptians, is dangerous from the venomous properties of its saliva. The *arda*, a species of ant (*termes fatalé*),

\* ‘We saw locusts,’ says Niebuhr, ‘put into bags or on strings, to be dried, in several parts of Arabia. In Barbary, they are boiled, and then dried upon the roofs of the houses. The Bedouins of Egypt roast them alive, and devour them with the utmost voracity. The Jews in Arabia are convinced that the fowls of which the Israelites ate so largely in the desert, were only clouds of locusts, and laugh at our translators, who have supposed that they found quails where quails never were.’ This notion, however, which has been adopted by Ludolphus, and favoured by Bishop Patrick and Saurin, has been ably refuted by Harmer and others. The Septuagint, Josephus, and all commentators, ancient and modern, have understood the Hebrew *selav*, or *shalav*, as signifying quails. Mohammed, speaking of the miracle in the Koran, uses the Arabic *salva*, which is explained by one of his commentators as the same as the *samani* (in Persian *semavah*), the quail. In Psal. lxxviii, 27, the *selavim* are termed *ouph canaph*, fowls of the wing. Maundrell asked the Samaritan high-priest of Nablous, what sort of animal he took the *selavim* to be, and he described it as a fowl answering to the quail. Josephus remarks, that the Arabian Gulf is peculiarly favourable to the breeding of these birds; Pliny and others mention their astonishing numbers; and Diodorus describes the manner in which they are caught near Rhinocolura, in terms similar to those of the sacred historian.

the *scolopendra*, and the *tenebrio*, are among the insect tormentors.

According to Niebuhr, Arabia contains at present no mines of either gold or silver; but M. Malte Brun remarks, that the positive and unanimous testimony of the ancients will not permit us to doubt of the former wealth of the Arabian mines. All the gold now in circulation is drawn from Abyssinia or Europe; and it is remarkable, that the Arabians are much infected with the mania of alchemy. In Omaun, there are very rich lead mines, and a large quantity is exported from Mascat. There are iron mines in the district of Saadé, but the iron which they yield is brittle. The onyx is common in Yemen; the agate called the Mocha-stone, comes from Surat; and the finest cornelians are brought from the Gulf of Cambay. Our knowledge of the natural productions of this country cannot be regarded, however, as by any means complete. The pearl-fishery carried on in the Persian Gulf, off the coast of Bahhrein, was estimated to produce, in the sixteenth century, the annual sum of 500,000 dueats. It is still valuable.

This rapid sketch of the physical geography and productions of Arabia, will receive further illustration as we proceed with our topographical description of those parts which have been visited by modern travellers. But we must first cast a retrospective glance at the history of this interesting country, stretching back into the twilight of time.

#### HISTORY OF ARABIA.

According to the traditions of the country, Arabia was originally peopled by several famous tribes, which are now extinct. The tribe of Aad, the son of Uz, the son of Aaram, the son of Saum, or Shem, settled in Al Ahkaf, in the province of Hadramaut. Here Aad founded a magnificent city,

which was furnished by his son Shedâd, who built a fine palace with delicious gardens, called the garden of Irem. This city is believed to be still standing in the desert of Aden, but to be miraculously hidden from view. The descendants of Aad, who were giants, fell into idolatry, and the prophet Houd was sent to reclaim them: on their refusing to hear him, God sent a hot and suffocating wind, which blew for a week, and destroyed them all, except a few believers who retired with the prophet. A small town near Hasek, called Kabr Houd (the sepulchre of Houd), is said to be his burial-place. The tribe of Thamoud were also descended from Aaram by his son Gether: they first dwelt in Yemen, but, being expelled by Hamyar the son of Saba, they settled in the territory of Hajar (Petra), 'where their habitations cut out of the rocks, mentioned in the Koran, are still to be seen.' They too, fell into idolatry, and, on refusing to listen to the prophet Salah, were destroyed by an earthquake. The tragical destruction of these two powerful tribes, is often insisted on in the Koran as instances of the Divine judgments on unbelievers.\* The tribe of Amelek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau (though some oriental writers deduce his pedigree from Ham,† and others from Azd, the son of Shem), became very powerful, and, extending themselves westward, conquered the lower Egypt under their King Walid, before the time of Joseph;‡ but, after they had reigned there for

\* A portion of the posterity of Aud (or Aad) and Thamoud, however, extended themselves eastward, and, according to the Arabian historians, were denominated Armanians or *Armenians*, because Aud was the son of Aaram. Certain chiefs of this double stock of Aud and Thamoud rose to power in Irak, on the ruins of the Ashkanian monarchy.

† Cham, Aram, Uz, Aad, Amalek. — See RELAND, lib. i, c. 14.

‡ This tradition refers evidently to the Phœnician shepherds of the Egyptian histories. The invasion of Egypt by the



some generations, they were expelled by the natives, and at length extirpated by the Israelites.

The present Arabians, according to their own historians, are sprung from two stocks, Kâhtan, or Joktan, the son of Eber, and Adnân, the lineal descendant of Ishmael. The posterity of the former they call *al Arab al Ariba*, *i. e.* pure Arabs; that of the latter, *al Arab al Mostareba*, *i. e.* mixed Arabians.\* Yarab, one of the sons of Kâhtan, is stated to have founded the kingdom of Yemen,† and Jor-

shepherd-kings is fixed by Archbishop Usher, A. M. 1920, eighty-eight years before the birth of Abraham. Bishop Cumberland supposes it to have taken place A. M. 1937. — See BRYANT'S *Mythol.* vol. vi, p. 153.

\* This distinction seems alluded to by the prophet Jeremiah: 'And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert.' — *Jer.* xxiv, 24.

† In Gen. x, we read that Joktan, the brother of Peleg, begat Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimuel, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; and 'their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the East.' Many of these names are clearly referrible to Arabia. Hazarmaveth has been conjectured to be Hadramaut, which is not improbable; Uzal is the ancient name of Sanaa, the capital of Yemen; Sheba is the ancient Saba; and Havilah is Khaulan. Mesha has been somewhat fancifully identified with Mekka. To Yarab is ascribed the invention of the Arabic language, — an idle legend. He left a son named Yashjeb, or Yash-hab, who was the father of Seba, surnamed Abdus shemss, *i. e.* worshipper of the sun; the parent, as it should seem, of the Sabean idolatry. He is said to have been entitled Sebâ (from *Shabah*, in Heb. captivity), because he introduced the practice of making slaves of captives. It is, however, improbable that Seba was a surname, and its etymology is doubtful. Sheba and Seba were evidently distinct names (see Gen. x, 7; and Psal. lxxii, 10); and yet, they are often confounded or put for one another. The name of Abdus-shemss was probably Sheba, since a son of Joktan of that name is mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis. Seba was a son, and another Sheba a grandson of Cush, the son of Ham. The Sabeans were evidently Cushites: compare Isa. xliii, 3; xlv, 14. They were believed to have spread from Chuzestân,



ham, another son; that of Hedjaz. The posterity of Jorham reigned in Hedjaz till the time of Ishmael, who married into this tribe, and his second son Kedar (Keidaur) is said to have succeeded to the throne. The descents from Ishmael to Adnan are variously given, and are confessedly uncertain; but a regular genealogy brings down the descents from Adnan to Koreish, the ancestor of Mohammed. In the mean time, the greater part of Arabia Felix, comprising Yemen, Saba, and Hadramaut, were governed by princes of the tribe of Hamyar (Himyar, or Homeir), who bore the general title or surname of *Tobbaa*. The kingdom of the Hamyarites, or Homeirites, is said to have lasted upwards of 2,000 years. During this period, there were several petty sovereigns in different parts of Yemen, but they were for the most part subject to the Hamyarite sovereign, who was distinguished as the great king.\* The annals of the Hamyarite dynasty are doubtless

the Asiatic Ethiopia, along the banks of the Euphrates and the shores of the Persian Gulf. Abdus-sheimss left three sons, Kahlaun (Khaulan — Havilah?), Mezzah, and Hameir or Hamyar. Kahlaun was the progenitor of the Beni Lakhem and Beni Ghassan. He was succeeded by his brother Hamyar, the founder of the Hamyarite dynasty, who is supposed to have been contemporary with the patriarch Abraham.

\* Hareth ul Rayesh, the twenty-first in descent from Hamyar, first assumed the title of *Tobbâ*, as lord of all Yemen. His authority is said to have extended to the shores of India, and he pushed his conquests into Irâk and even Azerbaijan. Yet, he acknowledged the paramount authority of the Persian monarch Manûcheher (Mandaucæ, said to have been contemporary with Moses,) whose power extended to the remotest limits of the west; the Pharaohs of the race of Amlak (Amalek) alone disputed the supremacy of the Persian monarchs. Hareth ul Rayesh was succeeded by his son Abramah, or Abraham, surnamed Zûlmenaur, whose son Obed Zalazzaur was succeeded by Modaud, the son of Sherauhil. This Modaud was succeeded by Balkeiss, his daughter or sister, the celebrated queen of Saba (Sheba), or Maureb.

blended with fable, but there seems to be good reason to believe that some of these Arabian monarchs were both enterprising and powerful. Abû Kurrûb Tobbaâ (*i. e.* the father of affliction, a surname acquired by his victories and his cruelties) is said to have proceeded by the route of Mossoul into Azerbaijaun, where he combated and defeated the Tartars. On his return, he received an embassy from the sovereign of Hindustân, proffering terms of amity. The rare articles presented by the ambassador led to inquiries respecting the country which produced them, and for the first time the Arabian prince heard of the existence of China. On the departure of the Indian embassy, the Tobbaa determined on an expedition to that distant country. Having by some means led his army through the territory of Balkh to the frontiers of Hindustân, he proceeded through Turkestân, skirting the territory of Tibet, where he left a division of 12,000 Arabs as a body of reserve, to retire upon in case of discomfiture. He finally succeeded in penetrating the boundaries of the Chinese monarchy, and, after plundering the cities in all directions, returned with an immense booty, through western Tartary, into India, whence he conducted his army safely back to Yemen, having consumed seven years in this remote and perilous expedition. The 12,000 Arabs were never, however, withdrawn from Tibet, and vestiges of the race are still to be discovered in different parts of Turkestân. The city of Shamer-kand (from *kenden*, to destroy, converted by the Arabs into Samarkand), is said to have been founded by this conqueror on the site of the capital of Soghd, which he overthrew. Such is the account given by the native historians ; and, 'without admitting to its full extent,' says the writer to whom we are indebted for these details, 'the reality of this expedition, we shall only remark, that, on its early conquest by the Mahomedan armies, an inscription was found engraven on

the gates of Bokhâra, expressly recording the presence of Tobbaa the Hamyarite, at least in that neighbourhood; otherwise we should have been disposed to consider the whole as an extravagant fabrication.\* Abû Kurrûb (named also Shaumer-beraush,) is supposed to have been contemporary with Bahman, King of Persia, about A.C. 465.†

Alexander the Great is said to have contemplated the invasion of Arabia; and the fleet of Nearchus was preparing to make the circuit of the peninsula, when the death of the conqueror terminated all his magnificent designs. The territories of the Persian monarchy included between the Tigris and the Oxus, remained in the possession of the *Mâlouk-ul-Towâeif*, or chiefs of various tribes, among whom they had been partitioned, for a period of 523 years, which brings down the history to the first year of the third century of the Christian era. Several princes, indeed, in the course of these five centuries, obtained possession of Irak Arab, Medâeine, and even Rey and Isfahaun, and were acknowledged as lords paramount by these independent chieftains. The most famous of these monarchs was Ashak, the founder of the Arsacian or Parthian dynasty, about A. C. 250. It was during the reign of Shahpoor (Sapor,) the son of Ashak (Arsaces) II, according to one Arabian his-

\* Price's Essay towards the History of Arabia, p. 98.

† Major Price is disposed to place him earlier, as contemporary with Lohorasp, the successor of Kia Khosrou, who died A. C. 529; but this is hardly reconcilable with the subsequent chronology. Abû Kurrûb Berraush was succeeded by his son Abû Malek ben Berraush, whose son Akren succeeded to the throne, under the title of Tobbaa Sauny. Zû Jeshaun, the son of Akren, and, consequently, great-grandson of Shaumer Berraush, is said to have been contemporary with Darab II, (Darius Codomanus), and Iscandeer (Alexander of Macedon), and to have reigned for seventy years.

torian, that the Messiah was born, and John the Baptist released ; but, according to others, the destruction of Jerusalem, (which is asserted to have been accomplished by the direction of the Persian monarch, to avenge the death of John, the son of Zechariah,) took place in the reign of Baharam Gondurz, the son of Bellaush, the fifteenth monarch of that dynasty. The fact is, that there is a chasm of two centuries in the Persian annals, between the last mentioned sovereign and Shahpoor, the son of Ashak II, during which period Phrahates, Orontes, and Mithridates the Great, an intrusive dynasty, occupied the throne. Ardavan (Artabanus V), the last of the Arsacidian race, was slain by the founder of the Sassanian dynasty, Ardasheir, Baubegan (Artaxerxes I), early in the third century. Amrû ben Tobbaa, king of Yemen, is stated to have been the contemporary of Shahpoor (Sapor I), the son of Ardasheir ; and the successor of this Amrû, Abed Kûllaul ben Massoub, is said to have embraced Christianity, though he was deterred by political motives from openly avowing his belief.

Soon after the time of Alexander the Great, according to the authorities cited by Sale, a catastrophe took place in the kingdom of Yemen, which led to the emigration of eight tribes, and the foundation of the kingdoms of Ghassan and Heirah. 'Abdshems (or Abdus-shemss) having built the city from him called Saba, and afterwards Mareb, made a vast mound or reservoir to receive the water which came down from the mountains, not only for the use of the inhabitants, and watering their land, but also to keep the country they had subjected in greater awe, by being masters of the water. This building stood like a mountain above the city, and was by them esteemed so strong, that they were in no apprehension of its ever failing. The water rose to the height of almost twenty fathoms, and was kept in on every side



by a work so solid, that many of the inhabitants had their houses built upon it. Every family had a certain portion of this water distributed by aqueducts. But at length, God being highly displeased at their great pride and insolence, and resolving to humble and disperse them, sent a mighty flood, which broke down the mound by night, while the inhabitants were asleep, and carried away the whole city, with the neighbouring towns and people.\* 'This probably,' it is added, 'was the time of the migration of those tribes, or colonies, which were led into Mesopotamia by three chiefs, Bekr, Modar, and Rabîa, from whom the three provinces of that country are still named Diyar Bekr (Diarbekir), Diyar Modar, and Diyar Rabîa.' One of the tribes who left the country, as it is alleged, on account of this inundation, was the tribe of Azd, who settling in Syria Damascena, near a water called Ghassân, thence took their name, and drove out the Dajaamian Arabs of the tribe of Salih,† who before possessed the country. Here they maintained their kingdom, some say 400, others (as Abulfeda) above 500 years. Five of these princes were named Hâreth, which the Greeks write Aretas; and one of them it was whose governor ordered the gates of Damascus to be watched to take St Paul. This tribe became Christians. Their last king, Jabalah, the son of Al Ayham, on the success of the Arabs in Syria, professed Mohammedism under the Khalif Omar; but, receiving a disgust from him, returned to his former faith, and retired to Constantinople. The princes of this race were called the Beni Haneifah, from their founder. The other tribe referred to, who founded the kingdom of Heirah, in

\* If this reservoir was constructed by Abdus-shemss, it must have lasted, at this time, about 1,700 years.

† A mountain near Damascus still bears the name of Salhiyeh. See MOD. TRAV., *Syria*, vol. ii, pp. 36, 64.



Chaldea, or Irâk, were descendants of Kahlaun ;\* but, after a few descents, the sovereignty fell, by intermarriage, to the Beni Lakhem, whose princes bore the title of Mondar (or Munzer).† Notwithstanding some small interruption from the Persians, they preserved their dominion up to the khalifate of Abubeker, a period of 622 years, when Al Mondar al Maghrâr, (Mûnzer V,) the last of this race, lost his life and crown by the arms of Khaled Ebn al Walîd. These princes were, for the most part, under the protection of the kings of Persia, whose lieutenants they were over the Arabs of Irâk, as the kings of Ghassân were lieutenants of the Roman emperors over the Syrian Arabs.

Other native historians cited by Major Price, give a different account of the origin of the Arabian colo-

\* These Arabs of Bahhreïn and Yemaumah are stated to have emigrated from Mekka and other parts of Hedjaz, being compelled by the scarcity of food to disperse and seek a new settlement. They were chiefly of the tribe of Azd, and were all, without exception, idolaters. The most distinguished of these chieftains was Malek ben Nemeir, otherwise ben Fohem, who fixed the seat of his government at Heirah. Among the Arabs who settled in Yemaumah were the united tribes of Tasm (or Tasseem), the reputed posterity of Loud, the son of Shem, and Jadish (or Jadeiss), the descendants of Jether, who became completely extirpated in a civil contest, which led to the invasion and desolation of their country by Hassaunben-Tobba, the monarch of Yemen, a short time before the fall of the last of the Arsacidæ.

† It should rather have been said, that several of the princes of Heirah bore this name. There appear to have been five of the name of Munzer or Mondar ; three reigned under the name of Amrul Kaiss ; there were three Niaumans (Naaman), and other names occur at intervals in the succession. The seat of their government was at first fixed at Anbaur, but transferred to Heirah by Amru the son of Auddy, the first of the Benni Lakhem who attained the sovereignty. The establishment of this petty dynasty is calculated to have occurred about A.D. 12, the invasion of Bahhreïn by Khaled having taken place A.D. 633.

nies of Irak. Many Arabs of the tribes of Azd and Lakhem are said to have followed Abû Kurrûb in his victorious expeditions, and to have remained by the way in Irak and other parts of the country through which he marched. But Heira and Anbaur in particular are stated, by another authority, to have been peopled by the race of Moaud, the son of Adnan, who were carried away captive from Arabia by Bakhtunusser or Nabukhtunusser (Nebuchadnezzar) in his expedition against that country in the reign of Lohorasp, King of Persia.\* This same Bakhtunusser is related, by the Arabian historian, to have conducted an expedition into Syria and Palestine, where he destroyed the *Beit-ul-mûkoddess*, the house of the most holy, at Jerusalem, and returned to Irak with numerous captives. After this, on learning that the king of Egypt had given shelter to a number of Jewish refugees, whom he refused to give up, Bakhtunusser invaded Egypt with a powerful army, killed the king in battle, and returned with an immense booty. A number of the Jews who fled from Syria, and latterly from Egypt, found their way into Hedjaz, and established themselves in the vicinity of Yathreb, (as Medinah was then called,) where they founded several

\* This Bakhtunusser is described as the governor of Babylon and Irak. He was succeeded in his government, which is represented, however, as a mere lieutenancy of the Persian empire, by his son Lemrouje, who was succeeded by his son Balt-un-nusser. The latter is said to have been slain and superseded, in pursuance of the order of the Persian monarch Ardesheir Derrauzdust (Artaxerxes Longimanus), by Dareious the Sage, on whose death, the lieutenancy of Babel and Irak was given to Ahatoutous (Ahasuerus), who is said to have espoused a Jewess named Aysser (Esther), by whom he had a son named Kcyresh (Cyrus), who succeeded him. Though the chronology of the Arabian historian is involved in some confusion, the coincidence of the general out-line with the Scripture history stamps it with authenticity.

towns; among others, Khaibar, Foreizah (or Koreizah,) Wady-ul-Kora, Fedâk and Wady-us-Sebboua.

On the extinction of the Ashkanian or Arsacidian dynasty by Ardesheir Baubegan, the territory of the lower Tigris and Euphrates is said to have been taken possession of by certain Arabian tribes from Bahhrein, who pushed forward as far as the passes of Hulwaun: the country eastward of that mountain boundary was at this time still in possession of the independent princes called the *Mulouk-e-Towâeif*.\* 'The Arabians succeeded in making themselves masters, for a time, of all that lies between the straits of Hulwaun and the Tigris, and westward to Anbaur and Heirah, comprehending the whole of the territory called from them Irâk Arab. Syria and Anatolia, or Roum, were still under the dominion of the Romans; and the greater part of the habitable world was thus disposed of, until the period at which Ardesheir Baubegan added to his other triumphs by subverting the power of the *Mulouk-e-Towâeif*, to whose possessions (in Khorassaun and Irak Adjem) he then succeeded. This celebrated monarch, moreover, extended his conquests to the whole of the countries westward of the straits of Hulwaun to the Tigris, and to the whole of Irâk Arab and Babel; expelling the Arabs from every part of the country into which they had obtruded themselves, — from the rich levels of Mesopotamia, from Heirah and Kufah, and finally chasing them back again into the heart of their native wilds, — into Bahhrein and all the way into Hedjaz, where they were compelled to acknowledge themselves tributary to the Persian conqueror.'

Great numbers, however, of the *Mulouk-el-Nazzer*

\* These tribes were *Adjem* or genuine Persians: the territories of which they retained possession, were the districts of Hamadaun, Isfahaun, Jubbaul, Rey, Kohestaun, Koummiss, and the whole of Khorassaun.

(the name by which these intrusive Arabs were distinguished) survived the invasion of Ardesheir, and were permitted by the conqueror to occupy the countries of Bahhrein, Yemen, and Hedjaz, under the princes of Heirah. The Persian monarch permitted the Arab sovereign of Bahhrein to retain the town of Heirah, his capital, and its dependences, but rigorously reclaimed from him the whole of Irâk Arab. Shapoor, the son of Ardesheir, appears, however, to have restored the government of Irak to Amru 'l Keyss, the son of Amru-ben-Auddy, of the race of Nazzer, together with that of all Arabia; and this species of viceroyalty continued to be enjoyed by the princes of this house for a period of 114 years, including ten successions of the Persian monarchy. This Amru 'l (or Abdul) Keyss is represented to have been a Christian converted from idolatry.

In the reign of Hormuz II, the son of Narzi (Narses), the seventh monarch of the Sassanian dynasty, a tribute being demanded by the Persian monarch of the Syrian Arabs of Ghassan, that tribe, trusting to the protection of their Roman allies, refused to comply with the exaction. Before any foreign aid could reach them, they were defeated, and expelled the territory by the Persian troops; but a body of Arabs waylaid Hormuz in the desert, and put him and his attendants to the sword. He was succeeded by his posthumous child, Shapoor II. Availing themselves of his minority, the Arabs of Bahhrein, collecting an invading army from almost every tribe, crossed the Persian Gulf, and entered the province of Fars, plundering the country in all directions. Dreadful was the retaliation which these marauders drew down upon their country. No sooner had Shapoor attained the age of sixteen, than he put in execution the long cherished purpose of revenge. His first enterprise was to clear the province of Fars of these invaders, consisting of the tribes of Benni Temeim, Benni



Bukker, Benni Wâeil, and Benni Abdul Keyss, not one being allowed to escape, and their blood is described as flowing in rivulets to the sea. Soon after, young Shapoor crossed the Gulf into the territory of the Benni Abdul Keyss, where, renewing his career of slaughter, he put to the sword all of Arab race that fell into his hands. His troops were strictly prohibited from touching any plunder. He next, with astonishing rapidity, marched through the desert to Yathreb, massacring every Arab he met with, and filling up all the wells in his march. From Hedjaz, he continued his march into Palestine and Syria, even to the coasts of the Mediterranean; then, turning northward, appeared before Aleppo, extending in every direction the dire effects of his vengeance. From Syria, he returned to Irak Arab, where he ultimately fixed his residence at *Al Medâein* (the cities, *i. e.* Ctesiphon and Seleucia on opposite sides of the Tigris.) But, in pursuing his plans of vengeance, Shapoor had touched too closely on the confines of the Roman empire, and the Arabs who fled from his fury, carried their wrongs to the court of Julian. These circumstances are represented to have led to that emperor's fatal invasion of Persia, the details of which belong to Roman history. On the conclusion of the inglorious treaty of peace by which the Romans were suffered to withdraw from the Persian territory, Shapoor turned the whole force of his vengeance on the now unprotected Arabs. He pursued them with unsparing fury into all their retreats, putting them to death by various methods, sometimes with the aggravation of torture, till he had fairly satiated his revenge. At length, the Arabs were brought to sue for mercy; and on their humble submission, Shapoor sent a considerable number of them to settle in the province of Kermaun, whose descendants, the Benni Thauleb, Benni Bukker, and Benni Abdul Keyss, existed there 700 years after. The sovereignty of



Arabia is stated to have been restored by Shapoor to a prince of the name of Amru, of the Benni Nazzar, and to have been continued in his family by the succeeding monarchs down to Yezdejird II, which brings down the succession to the beginning of the seventh century. It is probable, that these princes took no part in the hostile invasion of Irak.

We must now return to the affairs of Yemen; — for it does not appear that the south-western provinces of Arabia were included in the viceroyalty of Heirah, or that the princes of Yemen were ever tributary to the Persian monarch. At the time that the Arabs of Bahhrein took possession of Irak, Abu Kurrub Assâeid, the monarch of Yemen, is also stated to have found his way into that country with a numerous force, and every town was thronged with the influx of Arabs from all parts of the Peninsula. But, being compelled to retreat before the Persian forces, he again withdrew to his native mountains. The government of the *Mâlouk-ul-Nazzar*, or princes of Heirah, included the territories of Irâk Arab and Jezzeirah, together with the adjoining deserts, and nominally the whole of Hedjaz. Some remoter districts of Hedjaz, however, as well as the principedom of Yemen, it is admitted, were entirely independent of their authority. Ardesheir Baubegan is said, indeed, to have extended his subjugation of Arabia to Yemen, but no details are given. The same writer represents the countries of Bahhrein, Yemen, and Hedjaz to have been united under the government of the *Mulouk ul-Nazzar*, whereas their sovereignty never extended over Yemen properly so called; nor does it appear that either Ardesheir or Shapoor ever crossed the southern desert. The former is stated simply to have chased the Arabs all the way to Hedjaz, and the latter proceeded from Hedjaz to Palestine and the north of Syria. In the reign of

Caligula, Ælius Gallus, prefect of Egypt, is recorded to have conducted a successful expedition into Arabia Felix or Yemen, where he reduced several cities. He landed at Medina, and marched nearly a thousand miles into the region between Mareb, the capital of the Sabæan Arabs, and the sea; but ‘the legions of Augustus,’ to use the words of Gibbon, ‘melted away in disease and lassitude; and it is only by a naval power that the reduction of Yemen has been successfully attempted.’\* This prefect is acknowledged by Pliny to have been the only one who ever led a Roman force into this country;† and in this instance, it is observable that the invaders came from the west, and by sea. He describes the Sabæans as most wealthy, from the fertility of their odoriferous woods, their gold, their well-watered fields, and the abundance of their wax and honey — *Gallus....retulit Sabæos ditissimos silvarum fertilitate odoriferâ auri metallis, agrorum riguis, mellis ceræque proventu*. Meriaba, or Merab, their capital, is stated to have been six miles in circumference. It was destroyed by the Roman invaders, and, according to Abulfeda, had not recovered from its overthrow in the fourteenth century. If there be any truth, however, in the story of the bursting of the reservoir, this will serve to account for the complete ruin of the city. It is very possible, that the mighty flood to which the

\* Gibbon remarks that the expressions found in Horace (Ode 29, lib. i; and Ode 24, lib. iii), *non ante devictis Sabææ regibus*, and, *intactis thesauris Arabum*, attest the unconquered state of the country. We look for these expressions in vain in Francis’s translation. Again we find the Roman bard alluding (Ode 12, lib. ii,) to the *plenas Arabum domos*; and Propertius thus compliments the Roman emperor (lib. ii, eleg. 10):

*India quin, Auguste, tuo dat colla triumpho,  
Et domus intactæ te tremit Arabiæ?*

† Lib. vi, c. 28.

Arabian historians ascribe that catastrophe, was, in fact, the Roman army, concerning the presence of which the impulse of national vanity led them to observe a total silence. At all events, the emigration which is said to have followed on this event, is more satisfactorily explained by referring it to the desolation spread by the invaders; and it agrees pretty nearly in time with the expedition of the Egyptian prefect.

It was reserved, however, for an Abyssinian conqueror to overthrow the Hamyarite monarchy; and here we must again have recourse to the Arabian historian. Sometime subsequent to the age of Baharam the Gour, we are told, and therefore towards the close of the fifth century, there reigned in Yemen a prince of the name of Assâeid, with the title of Tobbaul-aukhir. Possessing a body of warriors both numerous and formidable, he conceived the design of quitting Yemen at their head, in order to make himself master of Hedjaz. Assâeid and his subjects, together with the people of Mekka and Medinah, and indeed, it is added, of Arabia in general at this period, were gross idolaters, with the exception of a particular territory surrounding Medinah, which was in the occupation of a colony of Jews, the descendants of those who fled from Palestine and Syria before the armies of Bakhtunusser. Christianity, it would seem, had not yet extended itself beyond the confines of Syria in this direction; and no part of the Arabian territory, it is asserted by the historian, was at this period subject to the authority of either Roum or Persia. At the head of a numerous army, Assâid-ul-Tobbâ entered Hedjaz, and appeared in the neighbourhood of Mekka; but, finding that city a place environed by barren hills, without either water, trees, or herbage, he made no attempt to reduce it, but was prosecuting his march to Syria, when he was recalled to Medinah by the intelligence that the inhabitants of that town

had slain his son, whom he appears to have left there. Here the narrative runs into the wildness of an apocryphal legend. Tobbâ Assâid is represented to have been foiled in every attempt to make an impression on the place, and finding at length that the city was evidently under the peculiar protection of the God of heaven, he became converted to the Jewish faith, and drawing off his forces, proceeded to Mekka, not as an invader, but to offer up his devotions in the temple of the Kaaba. At his death he left three sons, Hussaun, Amru, and Zerraah, infants, during whose minority the sovereign power was exercised by an Arab Jew of the Benni Lakhem, called Rebbeiah (Rabbi?) Ben-ul-Nazzer ul Lakhemy; he was related to the royal house of Heirah. As soon as Hussaun had attained the age of discretion, Rebbeiah, who was probably his tutor or guardian, retired with his children to Heirah, and the last of the Tobbâides ascended the throne of his fathers. His reign was brief: at the end of five years, he quitted Yemen at the head of his army on an expedition into Syria, undertaken in despite of the dissuasion of his officers. The result was, that his troops revolted, and his own brother Amru headed the conspiracy, being chosen monarch in his stead. Hussaun was assassinated, but the fratricide is said never to have slept afterwards, and lived only long enough to avenge the murder on the chiefs who had instigated it. The third brother was too young to sustain the cares of government, and, in the disorder which ensued, the throne was seized by a usurper named Honeifah. He was slain, and succeeded by Zû (or Dhu) Nowauss, who appears to have been the son of Amru, though one account identifies him with Zerraah, the third brother of Tobbâ-ul-assgher. Whatever was his origin, he is described as an execrable tyrant, and a fierce persecutor of the Christians. The Benni Thâleb who resided in the town of Nedjeraun, had embraced the

religion of the Messiah, at the preaching of a Syrian Christian named Akeimoun. In consequence, it is alleged, of their having subsequently slain some Jews, because they would not turn Christians, Zu Nowauss, himself a Jew, invaded their territory with a powerful army, and, having taken their city, massacred 6,000 of the Christians of Nedjeraun, by throwing them into a trench filled with burning faggots and other combustibles. For this act of atrocious cruelty, he and his associates are anathematised in the Koran.\* A report of these cruelties being conveyed to the Christian Emperor of the East, the Cæsar (Anastasius I,) instigated the Nejaush (sultan) of Abyssinia to undertake the invasion of Yemen. Accordingly, he sent a powerful army under two of his generals, and Zu Nowauss, fleeing before the invaders, is said to have spurred his horse into the sea, and perished. The government of Yemen was now assumed by Abrahah, or Abramah, one of the Abyssinian generals, who is said to have been originally a slave. He reigned for three and twenty years, according to the Arabian annals, and was succeeded by his son Beksoum. Abrahah is stated to have led an army to the gates of Mekka, attended by a famous elephant, with the avowed design of demolishing the Kaaba; but his army was cut off, as is supposed, by the small-pox, or some other cutaneous complaint, and his design was thus miraculously frustrated.

\* ‘Accursed were the contrivers of the pit’ (or lords of the pit) ‘of fire supplied with fuel, when they sat round the same, and were witnesses of what they did against the true believers; and they afflicted them for no other reason, but because they believed in the mighty, the glorious God, unto whom belongeth the kingdom of heaven and earth.’ — *Koran*, by SALE, chap. lxxxv. The inhabitants of Nedjeraun are stated to have been still Christians in the time of the Khalif Omar, who contented himself with levying on them a contribution double what was required from believers in the Koran.



Mohammed was born in the same year, called the year of the elephant, A.D. 569.

At the time of the Abyssinian invasion, a prince of the ancient race of Hamyar yet survived; and when Abrahah usurped the throne, this person, whose name was Zi-Yazzen, made his escape, and carried his claims to the court of Anastasius. Failing in his application in that quarter, he repaired to the Persian monarch; but the distracted state of the empire rendered it inconvenient at that time to attend to his suit. Zi-Yazzen died, bequeathing his claims to his son Seyff, who urged them with more success on the chivalrous Noushirvân. That monarch, the nineteenth of the Sassanian dynasty, had acceded to the throne of his father Kobaud, in the fifth year of the reign of Justinian, A.D. 531. It could not, however, be before the year 571, that he undertook the conquest of Yemen on behalf of his feudatory, Seyff Ben Zi-Yazzen.\* The expedition landed at a port in the neighbourhood of Aadden (Aden), where, in a short time, numbers of the Hamyarites joined the standard of their prince. Messrouk, the successor of Beksoum, was slain; and the son of Zi-Yazzen, hastening to Sanaa, seated himself without opposition on the throne of his ancestors. His reign was, however, of short duration. While hunting in the neighbouring desert, he was waylaid and murdered by a party of Abyssinians, and with him terminated the race of Hamyar and the monarchy of Yemen. From the death of Seyff to the time of Mohammed, the government of Yemen devolved on the lieutenants of

\* The Arabian accounts make the reign of Beksoum, the son of Abrahah, extend to seventeen years, and that of Messrouk, his successor, to twelve years, which would bring us to A.D. 598; but Noushirvan died in A.D. 579. The chronology is evidently erroneous.

the Persian monarch, who bore the title of Ameer or Emirs.\*

Noushîrvân was now the sovereign paramount of Persia and Mesopotamia, part of India, Syria, and the whole of Arabia; — an extent of dominion never enjoyed by the most illustrious of his predecessors. For the first time, the whole of the peninsula was subordinated to one sovereign. Munzer III, the son of Ma-us-semma, ruled at Heirah, as viceroy of Irâk, Bahrein, and Yemaumah; to which were added Mosul and Omaun; and the Bedaweens of the Desert, the genuine posterity of Ishmael, alone retained their wild and lawless independence. Gibbon remarks, that ‘the arms of Sesostri and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia.’ And even now that its princes were nominally the vassals of the Persian, it is doubtful whether they yielded any tribute to the foreigner. When the coasts of the Arabian Gulf were subsequently taken possession of by the Turks in the six-

\* Gibbon has given a different version of this history, after his own manner. Dhu Nowauss will hardly be recognised in his pages under the name of Dunaan; Nedjraun is turned into Negra, or Nagran; and the Abyssinian Nejaush is made into Negus. His account of the affair is, that the Jews had seduced the mind of Dunaan, and urged him to retaliate the persecution inflicted by the imperial laws on their unfortunate brethren; that some Roman merchants were injuriously treated, and ‘*several Christians of Negra were honoured with the crown of martyrdom*,’ on which, ‘the churches of Arabia implored the protection of the Abyssinian monarch.’ Having mentioned the result of the invasion, he thus concludes the chapter: ‘After a long series of prosperity, the power of Abrahah was overthrown before the gates of Mecca; his children were despoiled by the Persian conqueror; and the Ethiopians were finally expelled from the continent of Asia. If a Christian power had been maintained in Arabia, Mahomet must have been crushed in his cradle; and Abyssinia would have prevented a revolution which has changed the civil and religious state of the world.’ — *Decline and Fall*, chap. xiii.

teenth century, though the Pasha of Sanaa had twenty-one beys under his command, no revenue was ever remitted to the Porte. 'The Turkish sovereign may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction,' remarks the Historian of the Roman Empire, 'but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke, and fruitless to attack. The obvious causes of their freedom are inscribed on the character and country of the Arabs. The slaves of domestic tyranny may vainly exult in their national independence; but the Arab is personally free, and he enjoys in some degree the benefits of society, without forfeiting the prerogatives of nature. Their spirit is free, their steps are unconfined, the desert is open, and the tribes and families are held together by a mutual and voluntary compact.\*

It must not, however, be forgotten, that, under the common name of Arabs, tribes differing very materially in their filiation, their manner of life, their dialect, and their advance in civilisation, have inconsiderately been confounded. We have already adverted to the broad distinction, which is the foundation of almost a natural antipathy, between the dwellers in towns and the dwellers in tents. So much, says Niebuhr, do the Bedouens value themselves on the purity of their descent, that they look with great contempt on the Arabs who live in cities, as a race debased by their intermixture with other nations; and no sheikh will marry the daughter of a citizen, unless impelled by poverty to contract so unequal an alliance. Sale remarks, that the posterity of Ishmael have no claim to be admitted as pure Arabs, inasmuch as their ancestor was a Hebrew, and only intermarried with the Benni Jorham. The fact is, that they are probably the only pure Arabs, and the Bedouens of the present day glory in their

\* Gibbon, chap. 1.

descent from Ishmael. But, independently of this difference of blood, so marked is the contrast between scattered pastoral tribes and an agricultural and commercial people — between a roving population, having no common head, no priesthood, no literature, in the earliest stage of civilization, and a nation like the Arabian, which, assuming, under the khalifate, the form of a compact empire, produced so many learned and illustrious men, and has left monuments of its grandeur in the three quarters of the Old World, — that we have learned to attach different associations to the words Arab and Arabian, as if they designated the natives of different countries: the former we apply to the semi-civilized Bedoween, while the latter appellative recalls the names of Mohammed and Haroun al Raschid, of Saladin and Akbar, of Avicenna and Abulfeda, and the courts of Bagdadt, and Kahira, and Granada, and Ghizni.

‘Whatever may be the pedigree of the Arabs,’ says Gibbon, ‘their language is derived from the same original stock as the Hebrew, the Syriac, and the Chaldee.’ We introduce this remark for the purpose of connecting with it the fact, that, at the time of Mohammed’s appearance, there prevailed two leading and distinct dialects, — the Hamyaritic and the Koreish. The former is believed to have borne a strong affinity to the Ethiopic, which, in many respects, approaches to the Hebrew and the Syriac more nearly than to the Arabic of the Koran. The Arabian grammarians tell a story of an Arab of Hedjaz, who, on being directed by the king of the Hamyarites to sit down, threw himself over a precipice, because the word *theb*, instead of sit down, signifies, in the Koreish dialect, leap down. The latter dialect is that which Mohammed himself spoke, and in which the Koran is written; it has, therefore, become the classical, or, rather, the sacred language

of the Mohammedans; but, so greatly does it differ from the modern dialects, according to Niebuhr, that the Arabic of the Koran may be regarded as a dead language, and it is now taught and studied at Mekka, as the Latin is at Rome. The written language of the higher classes has undergone little alteration, however, since the days of the khalifs. It is the spoken idiom that has departed so widely from the Arabic of the Koran, in consequence of having received so large a mixture of provincialisms and exotic words, while it has rejected the verbal inflexions which form the most striking distinction between the written Arabic and the other Semitic dialects. No language, again, Niebuhr says, is diversified by so many provincial dialects as the Arabic; but this arises chiefly from a difference of pronunciation.\* The original alphabet in use among the natives of the Peninsula, is believed to have been the Persepolitan or arrow-head character; and when the Koran first appeared, written in the Kufic character, the inhabitants of Yemen were unable to read it. The Kufic has, in its turn, been superseded by the modern characters, said to have been the invention of a vizier named Ibn Moklah, who lived about 300 years after Mohammed. The modes of writing in modern use

\* The chief varieties of the modern idiom are, the Syriac, the Egyptian, the Tripolitine, the Algerine, the dialect of Yemen, and that of Omaun. The Egyptian is reckoned purer and more strictly grammatical than the Syrian: the idiom of the Arabs in the north-western part of Africa is the most corrupt. Niebuhr thought the pronunciation of the southern Arabs softer and better adapted to European organs, than that of Syria and Kahira. Among other variations in the pronunciation of different letters, the *kaf* of the northern and western tribes is changed, in Omaun, into *tsh*, as *Bukhra*, *Kiab*, -- pronounced at Mascat, *Bâtsher*, *Tshiâb*. (Niebuhr.) The *the* is pronounced as *t* and *s* in Egypt, Barbary, and Syria. The *jim* in Egypt is hardened into *g*.



differ, however, scarcely less widely than the several dialects.

The tribe of Koreish were much addicted to commerce, and Mohammed was brought up to the same pursuits. 'The ungrateful soil of their territory refused the labours of agriculture, and their position was favourable to the enterprises of trade. By the sea-port of Jidda, at the distance only of forty miles, they maintained an easy correspondence with Abyssinia; and that Christian kingdom afforded the first refuge to the disciples of Mohammed. Mecca is placed almost at an equal distance, a month's journey, between Yemen and Syria. In the markets of Sanaa and Merab, in the harbours of Omân and Aden, the camels of the Koreishites were laden with a precious cargo of aromatics; a supply of corn and manufactures was purchased in the fairs of Bostra and Damascus; the lucrative exchange diffused plenty and riches in the streets of Mecca; and the noblest of her sons united the love of arms with the profession of merchandize. The cities of Mecca and Medina present, in the heart of Asia, the form, or rather the substance, of a commonwealth. The grandfather of Mohammed and his lineal ancestors appear, in foreign and domestic transactions, as the princes of their country; but they reigned, like Pericles at Athens, or the Medici at Florence, by the opinion of their wisdom and integrity: their influence was divided with their patrimony, and the sceptre was transferred from the uncles of the prophet to a younger branch of the tribe of Koreish.'\*

Such was the political state of Arabia at the time of Mohammed's appearance. Of the state of religion in the various principalities during what the Moslems call *the times of ignorance*, it is difficult to obtain a satisfactory account. The greater part of the people

\* Gibbon, chap. 1.

are represented as being still involved in the Sabean idolatry, concerning which little is certainly known; but it is generally believed to have consisted in the adoration of 'the host of heaven,' and the worship of images. 'The ancient Arabians and Indians,' says Sale, 'between which two nations was a great conformity of religions, had seven celebrated temples, dedicated to the seven planets; one of which, in particular, called *Beit Ghomdân*, was built in Sanaa, the metropolis of Yaman, by Dahae, to the honour of *Al Zoharah*, or the planet Venus, and was demolished by the Khalif Othman. The temple of Meecca is said to have been consecrated to *Zohal*, or Saturn. Though these deities were generally revered by the whole nation, yet, each tribe chose some one as the more peculiar object of their worship. Thus, as to the stars and planets, the tribe of Hamyar chiefly worshipped the sun; Misam, *Al Debarân*, the Bull's eye; Lakhm and Jodâm, *Al Moshtari*, or Jupiter; Tay, *Sohail*, or Canopus; Kais, Sirius; and Asad, *Otared*, or Mercury. Of the angels, or intelligences, which they worshipped, the Koran makes mention of only three which were worshipped under female names, *Allat*, *Al Uzza*, and *Manah*. These were by them called goddesses and daughters of God; an appellation they gave not only to the angels, but also to their images, which they either believed to be inspired with life by God, or else to become the tabernacles of the angels, and to be animated by them; and they gave them divine worship, because they imagined they interceded for them with God.' *Allat*, i. e. the goddess, is said to have been the idol of the tribe of Thakif, who dwelt at Tayef, and to have had a temple at Nakhlah. *Al Uzza*, i. e. the most mighty, is said to have been worshipped by the tribes of Koreish, Kenânah, and Salim: the acacia, or Egyptian thorn, appears to have been dedicated to her. *Manah*, the goddess of the tribes of Hodhail and Kho-

zâah, who dwelt between Mekka and Medinah, is said to have derived her name from *mana*, to flow, alluding to the flowing of the blood of the victims sacrificed to her. This goddess is said to have been no other than a large rude stone. Besides these, the Koran mentions five other popular idols; *Wadd*, worshipped under a human form; *Sawâ*, adored under the shape of a woman; *Yaghûth*, an idol in the shape of a lion; *Yâûk*, or *Yahuk*, worshipped under the form of a horse; and *Nasr*, worshipped by the Hamyarites in the shape of an eagle. These idols are said to have been all representatives of men of great merit and piety. Besides these, every housekeeper had his household gods. The tribe of Hanifah are said to have worshipped a lump of dough. The images of Asâf and Nayelah, the former a male, the latter a female idol, the one placed on Mount Safâh, the other on Mount Merwa, were also objects of adoration among the Koreish. These two idols are said to have been brought from Hobal in Syria; but a local tradition identifies them with two persons of the tribe of Jorham, who were converted into stone for defiling the Kaaba. The Kaaba itself (as the temple of Mekka is still called) is said to have contained 360 idols, equalling in number the days of their year. The genuine antiquity of this famous edifice ascends beyond the Christian era. It is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus as revered for its superior sanctity by all the Arabians. The linen or silken veil, which is annually renewed by the Turkish emperor, was first offered by a king of the Hamyarites, 700 years before the time of Mohammed.\* ‘The same rites which are

\* The Mohammedans contend, that it is the most ancient edifice on the globe, which it must be, if built, as their traditions say, by Abraham and his son Ishmael, on the site of an antediluvian tabernacle reared by Adam himself! The *Tarikh Tebry* makes Tobba-ul-Assaeid the first who covered the sacred edifice with a superb canopy, furnishing a precedent for

now accomplished by the faithful Mussulman, were invented and practised by the superstition of the idolaters. At an awful distance they cast away their garments; seven times, with hasty steps, they encircled the Caaba, and kissed the black stone; seven times they visited and adored the adjacent mountains; seven times they threw stones into the valley of Mina; and the pilgrimage was achieved, as at the present hour, by a sacrifice of sheep and camels, and the burial of their hair and nails in the consecrated ground. Each tribe either found or introduced in the Caaba their domestic worship. The temple was adorned, or defiled, with 360 idols of men, eagles, lions, and antelopes; and most conspicuous was the statue of Hebal, of red agate, holding in his hand seven arrows without heads or feathers, the instruments and symbols of profane divination.\* But this statue was a monument of Syrian arts: the devotion of the ruder ages was content with a pillar or a tablet; and the rocks of the desert were hewn into gods or altars, in imitation of the black stone of Mecca.† From Japan to Peru, the use of sacrifice has universally prevailed; and the votary has expressed his gratitude or fear, by destroying or consuming, in honour of the gods, the dearest and most precious of their gifts. The life of a man is the most precious oblation to deprecate a public calamity: the altars of

the practice which has ever since been continued; but if so, the custom is not older than the fifth century. We have here followed Gibbon, who refers to Pococke.

\* This statue of Hebal or Hobal is said to have been brought from Belka (qu. Baalbec or Baalgad?) in Syria, by Amru Ebn Lohai.

† This *litholatry* has been remarkably prevalent. Gibbon says, ‘these stones were no other than the *βαιτυλα* of Syria and Greece, so renowned in sacred and profane antiquity,’ — a word obviously derived from Bethel. Calmet says, the Mahomedans believe their temple at Mecca to be founded on the very stone which the patriarch Jacob anointed.

Phœnicia and Egypt, of Rome and Carthage, have been polluted with human gore. The cruel practice was long preserved among the Arabs; in the third century, a boy was annually sacrificed by the tribe of the Dumatians;\* and a royal captive was piously slaughtered by the prince of the Saracens, the ally and soldier of the emperor Justinian.†

Arabia afforded an asylum to the persecuted disciples of Zoroaster, numbers of whom are stated to have settled in the province of Bahhreïn. At an early period, it has already been mentioned, that Arabia received colonies of fugitive Jews; and during the wars of Titus and Hadrian, multitudes are said to have joined their countrymen. The tribes of Kenânah, Al Hareth Ebn Caaba, and Kendah, with some others, embraced the Jewish faith; and long before the reign of Dhu Nowauss, 700 years before the time of Mohammed, Abu Kurruḥ Assaeid, king of Yēmen, introduced Judaism among the idolatrous Hamyarites. At what time Christianity was first preached in the Arabian peninsula, does not appear; but, as there were Arabian Jews at the feast of Pentecost,‡ the knowledge of the Gospel must have been, at all events, introduced there from its first promulgation. St Paul long resided in the Syrian kingdom of Aretas;§ and it is in the highest degree improbable, that the Koreishite traders, who frequented the fairs of Bostra and Damascus, should not have heard, and some of them have been disciplined by, the preaching of the apostle. Among those who fled from Palestine to Arabia before the armies of Vespasian and Titus, there were doubtless many

\* Dumætha, or Daumat al Jendal, is described by Ptolemy as in the mid-desert between Khaibar and Tadmor.

† Gibbon, chap. 1.

‡ Acts ii, 11.

§ Mod. Trav., Syria, vol. ii, p. 85.



Christians.\* Still, it is remarkable, that no part of the Holy Scriptures is known to have been translated into any of the dialects of Arabia. It is inferred only by Gibbon, that an Arabic version must have existed, '1. from the perpetual practice of the synagogue, of expounding the Hebrew lesson by a paraphrase in the vulgar tongue of the country; and, 2. from the analogy of the Armenian, Persian, and Ethiopic versions, expressly quoted by the fathers of the fifth century, who assert that the Scriptures were translated into all the Barbaric languages.' But it is probable that the Syriac was the vernacular idiom of the Arabian Jews. And if the only alphabet used in Yemen, prior to the Kufic, was the arrow-head character, and the Kufic itself had been but lately introduced at Mekka from the banks of the Euphrates, it does not seem very probable, that the mountaineers of Yemen ever possessed a version of the *Anjeil* (Gospel). The first monarch of Yemen who is recorded to have been a Christian, appears to have reigned at the beginning of the fourth century, by which time Christianity had widely departed from the religion of the New Testament. Frequent mention, indeed, is made, in the early monuments, of the bishops of Arabia; and a bishop of Busorah (Bozra?) was present at the council of Antioch, A.D. 269;† but those bishops, we apprehend, were Syrians, not Arabians, and their sees were either in Mesopotamia, or within that part of Arabia Petræa distinguished in ecclesiastical history as the Third Palestine. The first Christian king of Heirah is said to have been the Amrul Keyss who was contemporary with Behraum I, the great-grand-

\* Procopius asserts, that 'the disciples of Christ had filled the provinces of Arabia with the churches of God.'

† See Buchanan's Christian Researches, p. 280. Bassora, or Bussora, in Irak, was built by Omar in the 15th year of the Hegira. It is probable that Boszra or Bostra, the capital of Arabia Provincia, is the see in question.

son of Ardesheir Baubegan, and who must therefore have reigned some time in the fourth century.\*

Of the history of primitive Christianity in Arabia, then, we know nothing. Probably, the early Christian societies were few and scattered, and the disordered state of the country, in consequence of the Persian and Roman invasions, would lead them to take refuge in other countries, — in Abyssinia, Hindostan, and Armenia. When we descend to the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, we are no longer at a loss. ‘The persecutions and disorders which happened in the eastern church, soon after the beginning of the third century,’ says Sale, ‘obliged great numbers of Christians to seek for shelter in that country of liberty, who being for the most part of the Jacobite communion, that sect generally prevailed among the Arabs. The principal tribes that embraced Christianity, were, Hamyar, Ghassân, Rabia, Taghlab, Bahrah, Tonouch, part of the tribes of Tay and Koddâah, the inhabitants of Najrân, (Nedjeraun), and the Arabs of Heirah.....The Jacobites had two bishops subject to their *mafriân*, or metropolitan of the East: one was called the bishop of the Arabs absolutely, whose seat was for the most part at Akula;† the other had the title of the Bishop of the Scenite Arabs, of the tribe of Thaaleb, in Hira, whose seat was in that city. The Nestorians had but one bishop, who presided over both these dioceses of Hira and Akula, and was immediately subject to their patriarch.’ Whatever place be meant by Akula, the see was evidently

\* The Abu Kabès, King of Heirah, referred to by Sale, as having embraced Christianity, was slain only a few months before Mohammed’s birth, after a reign of four years. His father, the famous Al Mondar (Munzer III,) who is stated to have professed the same faith, and to have built large churches in his capital, was the lieutenant of Noushirvan.

† Abulfaragius makes Akula to be Kûfah; others make it a different town near Bagdad. — See SALE.

in Arabian Irak; and that of Heirah could only include the western shore of the Persian Gulf. Thus, in fact, the larger part of the peninsula does not appear to have been under the ecclesiastical rule of either Jacobite or Nestorian bishop.\* How is it that we do not read of a bishop of Saba or of Saana, of Mascat or of Mekka? A bishop of *Tephra*, which Sale supposes to be Dhafâr, is mentioned as disputing with the Jews of Hamyar; and Nedjeraun is also said to have been an episcopal see. These bishops we presume to have been of the orthodox communion, if they existed; but Gregentius, bishop of Tephra, might be a foreigner, possibly an Abyssinian prelate.

At all events, it is admitted that the state of the eastern churches, more especially of the Arabian, were in a deplorable state of declension and ignorance when the Koreishite impostor first conceived the bold project of uniting the jarring creeds of Jew, Christian, and Magian, in a new religion adapted to the time and to the people. 'If,' says Sale, 'we look into the ecclesiastical historians even from the third century, we shall find the Christian world to have then had a very different aspect from what some authors have represented; and so far from being endued with active grace, zeal, and devotion, and established within itself with purity of doctrine, union, and firm profession of the faith,—that, on the contrary, what by the ambition of the clergy, and what by drawing the abstrusest niceties into controversy, and dividing and subdividing about them into endless schisms and contentions, they had so destroyed that peace, love, and charity from among them, which the Gospel was given to

\* Gibbon says, 'The sects whom they (the Catholics) oppressed, successively retired beyond the limits of the Roman empire. The Marcionites and Manicheans dispersed their fantastic opinions and apocryphal gospels; the churches of Yemen, and the princes of Hira and Ghassan were instructed in the purer creed of the Jacobite and Nestorian bishops.'

promote, and, instead thereof, continually provoked each other to that malice, rancour, and every evil work, that they had lost the whole substance of their religion, while they thus eagerly contended for their own imaginations concerning it; and in a manner quite drove Christianity out of the world, by those very controversies in which they disputed with each other about it. In these dark ages it was, that most of those superstitions and corruptions we now justly abhor in the church of Rome, were not only broached, but established, which gave great advantages to the propagation of Mohammedism. The worship of saints and images, in particular, was then arrived at such a scandalous pitch, that it even surpassed whatever is now practised among the Romanists.

‘After the Nicene council, the eastern church was engaged in perpetual controversies, and torn to pieces by the disputes of the Arians, Sabellians, Nestorians, and Eutychians; the heresies of the two last of which have been shown to have consisted more in the words and form of expression than in the doctrines themselves, and were rather the pretences than real motives of those frequent councils, to and from which the contentious prelates were continually riding post, that they might bring every thing to their own will and pleasure. And to support themselves by dependants and bribery, the clergy in any credit at court undertook the protection of some officer in the army, under the colour of which justice was publicly sold, and all corruption encouraged.

‘In the western church, Damasus and Ursicinus carried their contests at Rome for the episcopal seat so high, that they came to open violence and murder, which Viventius the governor not being able to suppress, he retired into the country, and left them to themselves, till Damasus prevailed. It is said, that on this occasion, in the church of Sicinius, there were no less than 137 found killed in one day. And no

wonder they were so fond of these seats, when they became by that means enriched by the presents of matrons, and went abroad in their chariots and sedans in great state, feasting sumptuously even beyond the luxury of princees, quite contrary to the way of living of the country prelates, who alone seemed to have some temperance and modesty left.

‘These dissensions were greatly owing to the emperors, and particularly to Constantius, who, confounding the pure and simple Christian religion with anile superstitions, and perplexing it with intricate questions, instead of reconciling different opinions, excited many disputes, which he fomented as they proceeded with infinite altercations. This grew worse in the time of Justinian, who, not to be behind the bishops of the fifth and sixth centuries in zeal, thought it no crime to condemn to death a man of a different persuasion from his own.

‘This corruption of doctrine and morals in the princees and elergy, was necessarily followed by a general depravity of the people; those of all conditions making it their sole business to get money by any means, and then to squander it away, when they had got it, in luxury and debauchery.

‘But, to be more particular as to the nation we are now writing of, Arabia was of old famous for heresies, which might be in some measure attributed to the liberty and independency of the tribes. Some of the Christians of that nation believed the soul died with the body, and was to be raised again with it at the last day: these, Origen is said to have convinced. Among the Arabs it was that the heresies of Ebion, Beryllus, and the Nazaræans, and also that of the Collyridians, were broached, or at least propagated: the latter introduced the Virgin Mary for God, or worshipped her as such, offering her a sort of twisted cake called *collyris*, whence the sect had its name.

‘Other sects there were of many denominations



within the borders of Arabia, which took refuge there from the proscriptions of the imperial edicts, several of whose notions Mohammed incorporated with his religion.'

The posture of public affairs, both in the eastern and the western empires, was in the highest degree favourable to the success of this daring enterprise. 'If,' continues Sale, 'the distracted state of religion favoured the designs of Mohammed on that side, the weakness of the Roman and Persian monarchies might flatter him with no less hopes in any attempt on those once formidable empires, either of which, had they been in their full vigour, must have crushed Mohammedism in its birth; whereas nothing nourished it more than the success the Arabians met with in their enterprises against those powers, which success they failed not to attribute to their new religion, and the Divine assistance thereof.

'The Roman empire declined apace after Constantine, whose successors were for the generality remarkable for their ill qualities, especially cowardice and cruelty. By Mohammed's time, the western half of the empire was overrun by the Goths; and the eastern so reduced by the Huns on the one side, and the Persians on the other, that it was not in a capacity of stemming the violence of a powerful invasion. The emperor Maurice paid tribute to the Khagân, or King of the Huns; and after Phocas had murdered his master, such lamentable havoc there was among the soldiers, that, when Heraclius came, not above seven years after, to muster the army, there were only two soldiers left alive, of all those who had borne arms when Phocas first usurped the empire. And though Heraclius was a prince of admirable courage and conduct, and had done what possibly could be done to restore the discipline of the army, and had had great success against the Persians, so as to drive them not only out of his own

dominions, but even out of part of their own; yet still, the very vitals of the empire seemed to be mortally wounded; that there could no time have happened more fatal to the empire, or more favourable to the enterprises of the Arabs, who seem to have been raised up on purpose by God, to be a scourge to the Christian church, for not living answerably to that most holy religion which they had received. The general luxury and degeneracy of manners into which the Grecians were sunk, also contributed not a little to the enervating of their forces, which were still further drained by those two great destroyers, monachism and persecution.

‘The Persians had also been in a declining condition for some time before Mohammed, occasioned chiefly by their intestine broils and dissensions; great part of which arose from the devilish doctrines of Manes and Mazdak. The opinions of the former are tolerably well known: the latter lived in the reign of Khosru Kobâd, and pretended himself a prophet sent from God to preach a community of women and possessions, since all men were brothers, and descended from the same common parents. This, he imagined, would put an end to all feuds and quarrels among men, which generally arise on account of one of the two. Kobâd himself embraced the opinions of this impostor, to whom he gave leave, according to his new doctrine, to lie with the queen his wife; which permission, Anushirwân, his son, with much difficulty prevailed on Mazdak not to make use of. These sects had certainly been the immediate ruin of the Persian empire, had not Anushirwân, as soon as he succeeded his father, put Mazdak to death with all his followers, and the Manicheans also, restoring the ancient Magian religion.

‘In the reign of this prince, deservedly surnamed the Just, Mohammed was born. He was the last king of Persia who deserved the throne, which, after

him, was almost perpetually contended for, till subverted by the Arabs. His son Hormûz lost the love of his subjects by his excessive cruelty: having had his eyes put out by his wife's brothers, he was obliged to resign the crown to his son Khosrû Parvîz, who, at the instigation of Bahrâm Chubîn, had rebelled against him, and was afterwards strangled. Parvîz was soon obliged to quit the throne to Bahrâm; but obtaining succours of the Greek emperor Maurice, he recovered the crown: yet, towards the latter end of a long reign, he grew so tyrannical and hateful to his subjects, that they held private correspondence with the Arabs; and he was at length deposed, imprisoned, and slain by his son Shirûyeh. After Parvîz, no fewer than six princes possessed the throne in less than six years. These domestic broils effectually brought ruin upon the Persians; for, though they did, rather by the weakness of the Greeks than their own force, ravage Syria, and sack Jerusalem and Damascus under Khosrû Parvîz; and, while the Arabs were divided and independent, had some power in the province of Yaman, where they set up the last four kings before Mohammied; yet, when attacked by the Greeks under Heraclius, they not only lost their new conquests, but part of their own dominions; and no sooner were the Arabs united by Mohammedism, than they beat them in every battle, and in a few years totally subdued them.

‘As these empires were weak and declining, so Arabia, at Mohammed's setting up, was strong and flourishing; having been peopled at the expense of the Grecian empire, whence the violent proceedings of the domineering sects forced many to seek refuge in a free country, as Arabia then was, where they who could not enjoy tranquillity and their conscience at home, found a secure retreat. The Arabians were not only a populous nation, but unacquainted with the luxury and delicacies of the Greeks and Persians,

and inured to hardships of all sorts; living in a most parsimonious manner, seldom eating any flesh, drinking no wine, and sitting on the ground. Their political government was also such as favoured the designs of Mohammed; for the division and independency of their tribes were so necessary to the first propagation of his religion and the foundation of his power, that it would have been scarce possible for him to have effected either, had the Arabs been united in one society. But when they had embraced his religion, the consequent union of their tribes was no less necessary and conducive to their future conquests and grandeur.'

The tribe of Kōreish has already been referred to as one of the most distinguished in Arabia. As the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba, their princes enjoyed a species of pontifical supremacy. Haschem, the great-grandfather of Mohammed, at the commencement of the sixth century, raised the city under his government to a state of activity and opulence, by the establishment of two annual caravans, one for Syria, and the other for Yemen. His son, Abdul-Motalleb (or Abdulmûtleb), had the glory of defeating Abrahah, the Abyssinian usurper, and of delivering Mekka from the African invaders. Of the numerous progeny with which his domestic happiness was crowned, Abdallah was the youngest, who dying soon after his marriage with Ameinah, the mother of Mohammed, left his widow and infant son but slenderly provided for. On the division of his inheritance, the share of the future lord of Arabia consisted only of five camels and one Ethiopian slave.

Mohammed (pronounced Muhammed), the only son of Abdallah and Ameinah, was born at Mekka, A. D. 569, four years after the death of Justinian, and in the fortieth of the reign of Noushîrvân. In his sixth year he lost his mother, and, when he had attained his eighth year, his grandfather

Abdalmûtleb, who, with his dying breath, consigned him to the care of his uncle Abu Taleb, the pontifical head of the tribe. By this 'royal merchant,' young Mohammed was instructed in the arts of war and merchandise: he accompanied him to the fairs of Syria, and fought with him in the conflicts between the Arabian tribes. In his twenty-fifth year, he obtained the office of factor to Kadijah, the widow of a wealthy trader, who soon rewarded his fidelity with the gift of her hand and fortune; and by this fortunate step, the son of Abdallah was at once raised to an equality with the proudest merchants of Mekka.

The youth of Mohammed is said to have been marked by the seriousness of his deportment, and his strict attention to devotional exercises. Of what nature these were, Jewish, Christian, or Pagan, does not appear. His family were idolaters. It was not, however, till he had attained his fortieth year, the last fifteen of which he had lived in ease and independence, that he announced his prophetic mission. How these fifteen years of preparation were passed, at what period he first conceived the ambitious or fanatical project, and how he obtained the knowledge displayed in the Koran, are matter of mere conjecture. All that we are told is, that once every year, in the month of Ramadan, he retired for the purposes of fasting, prayer, and meditation, to a cave in Mount Hara, near Mekka, and that by this periodical seclusion, as well as by his charity and frugality, he obtained a high name for sanctity among his fellow-citizens. Gibbon styles him an illiterate barbarian, and refers to the Koran in proof that he could neither read nor rite. With all the credulity of a sceptic, he seems to attribute, nevertheless, to Mohammed's unassisted genius, the whole composition of the Koran; and though the Historian was unable to read a page of the original, he adduces the uniformity



of the work as a proof of its being the composition of a single artist! Illiterate Mohammed might be, although the use he makes of his ignorance, real or affected, in the Koran, to prove the reality of the revelations it contains, tends to bring into suspicion his own declarations on this subject. But whether he could himself read or not, is a matter of little consequence: he had evidently access through some indirect medium to both the canonical and the apocryphal scriptures. He seems to have had some obscure information with regard to the promise of the Paraclete;\* and it may be worth remark, that the name by which he designates the apostles of Jesus (*Al Hâwariyan*) is not Arabic, but Ethiopic.† The charge that he was assisted in the composition, he himself notices in a way that shows a particular individual was suspected, and that individual a foreigner. 'We also know that they say, Verily, a certain man teacheth him to compose the Koran. The tongue of the person unto whom they incline, is a foreign tongue; but this, wherein the Koran is written, is the perspicuous Arabic tongue.' The variation of the traditions as to who was the suspected individual here alluded to, proves only that he had more than one likely confederate among his Jewish, Persian, and Christian associates.‡ The second person to whom he entrusted

\* See Sale's Koran, chap. lxi. The Persian paraphrast on the passage referred to, cites in explanation John xvi, 7; but this misapplication is founded on a blunder, *Paracletos*, a comforter, being confounded with *Periclutos*, very celebrated, which is the meaning both of Mohammed and Ahmed. Gibbon remarks that, this promise had already been usurped by the Montanists and Manicheans, which may possibly indicate the source of Mohammed's information.

† See Sale's Koran, chap. iii, *notes*.

‡ Dr Prideaux, in his *Life of Mohammed*, cites several authorities in support of his opinion, that the person alluded to in the Koran, as suspected of assisting Mohammed, was Abdia Ben Salon, or Abdallah Ebn Salam, a Persian Jew, 'a cun-

the secret of his mission, was the cousin of his wife Kadijah, Warrakah Ebn Nawfal, 'who being a Christian, could write in the Hebrew character, and was tolerably well versed in the Scriptures; and he as readily came into her opinion, assuring her that the same angel who had formerly appeared to Moses, was now sent to Mohammed.'\* It is singular, that this person is not noticed among the different individuals to whom the suspicions attached.†

'Encouraged by so good a beginning,' says Sale, 'he resolved to proceed, and try for some time what he could do by private persuasion, not daring to hazard the whole affair by exposing it too suddenly to the public. He soon made proselytes of those under his own roof, viz, his wife Khadijah, his servant Zeid Ebn Hâretha (to whom he gave his freedom on that occasion, which afterwards became a rule to his followers), and his cousin and pupil Ali, the son of Abu Tâleb, though then very young: but this last, making no account of the other two, used to style himself the first of believers. The next person Mohammed applied to, was Abdallah Ebn Abi Kohâfa, surnamed Abu Becr, a man of great authority among the Koreish, and one whose interest he well knew would be of

ning, crafty fellow, so thoroughly skilled in all the learning of the Jews, that he had commenced rabbi among them.' It was he who, by his skill in drawing an intrenchment at the 'battle of the ditch,' saved Mohammed and all his army. Sale however states, that Salman the Persian was a different man from Abdallah Ebn Salam. (*Koran*, chap. xvi, *note*.) Johannes Andreas, a doctor of the Mohammedan law, who turned Christian, is among others cited by Prideaux, as affirming that this learned Jew 'was, for ten years together, the person by whose hand all the pretended revelations of the Impostor were first written, and, therefore, no doubt he was a principal contriver in the forging of them.' And Sale, in his Preliminary Dissertation, though he frequently exposes Prideaux's inaccuracies, admits that he has given the most probable account of this matter.

\* Sale, Prelim. Diss. † 2. † Sales's *Koran*, chap. xvi, *notes*.

great service to him, as it soon appeared; for Abu Becr being gained over, prevailed also on Othmân Ebn Affân, Abd'alrahmân Ebn Awf, Saad Ebn Abi Wakkâs, al Zobeir Ebn al Awâm, and Telha Ebn Obeid'allah, all principal men in Mecca, to follow his example. These men were the six chief companions who, with a few more, were converted in the space of three years; at the end of which Mohammed having, as he hoped, a sufficient interest to support him, made his mission no longer a secret, but gave out that God had commanded him to admonish his near relations; and, in order to do it with more convenience and prospect of success, he directed Ali to prepare an entertainment, and invite the sons and descendants of Abd'almotaleb, intending then to open his mind to them; this was done, and about forty of them came; but Abu Laheb, one of his uncles, making the company break up before Mohammed had an opportunity of speaking, obliged him to give them a second invitation the next day; and when they were come, he made them the following speech: 'I know no man in all Arabia who can offer his kindred a more excellent thing than I now do you; I offer you happiness both in this life and that which is to come: God Almighty hath commanded me to call you unto him; who, therefore, among you will be assisting to me herein, and become my brother and my vicegerent?' All of them hesitating and declining the matter, Ali at length rose up, and declared that he would be his assistant; and vehemently threatened those who should oppose him. Mohammed upon this embraced Ali with great demonstrations of affection, and desired all who were present to hearken to and to obey him as his deputy: at which the company broke out into great laughter, telling Abu Taleb that he must now pay obedience to his son.

'This repulse, however, was so far from dis-

couraging Mohammed, that he began to preach in public to the people, who heard him with some patience, till he came to upbraid them with the idolatry, obstinacy, and perverseness of themselves and their fathers; which so highly provoked them, that they declared themselves his enemies, and would soon have procured his ruin, had he not been protected by Abu Taleb. The chief of the Koreish warmly solicited this person to desert his nephew, making frequent remonstrances against the innovations he was attempting; which proving ineffectual, they at length threatened him with an open rupture if he did not prevail on Mohammed to desist. At this Abu Taleb was so far moved, that he earnestly dissuaded his nephew from pursuing the affair any further, representing the great danger he and his friends must otherwise run. But Mohammed was not to be intimidated, telling his uncle plainly, that if they set the sun against him on his right hand, and the moon on his left, he would not leave his enterprise: and Abu Taleb, seeing him so firmly resolved to proceed, used no further arguments, but promised to stand by him against all his enemies.

‘The Koreish finding they could prevail neither by fair words nor menaces, tried what they could do by force and ill treatment, using Mohammed’s followers so very injuriously, that it was not safe for them to continue at Mecca any longer; whereupon Mohammed gave leave to such of them as had not friends to protect them, to seek for refuge elsewhere. And, accordingly, in the fifth year of the prophet’s mission, sixteen of them, four of whom were women, fled into Ethiopia; and among them Othmân Ebn Affân and his wife Rakîah, Mohammed’s daughter. This was the first flight; but afterwards, several others followed them, retiring one after another, to the number of eighty-three men and eighteen

women, besides children. These refugees were kindly received by the Najashi or King of Ethiopia, who refused to deliver them up to those whom the Koreish sent to demand them, and, as the Arab writers unanimously attest, even professed the Mohammedan religion.

‘ In the sixth year of his mission, Mohammed had the pleasure of seeing his party strengthened by the conversion of his uncle Hamza, a man of great valour and merit, and of Omar Ebn al Khattâb, a person highly esteemed, and once a violent opposer of the Prophet. As persecution generally advances rather than obstructs the spreading of a religion, Islamism made so great a progress among the Arab tribes, that the Koreish, to suppress it effectually, if possible, in the seventh year of Mohammed’s mission, made a solemn league or covenant against the Hashemites and the family of Al Motaleb, engaging themselves to contract no marriages with any of them, and to have no communication with them ; and to give it the greater sanction, reduced it into writing, and laid it up in the Caaba. Upon this, the tribe became divided into two factions; and the family of Hashem all repaired to Abu Taleb, as their head, except only Abd’al Uzza, surnamed Abu Laheb, who, out of his inveterate hatred to his nephew and his doctrine, went over to the opposite party, whose chief was Abu Sofîân Ebn Harb, of the family of Ommeya.

‘ The families continued thus at variance for three years ; but, in the tenth year of his mission, Mohammed told his uncle Abu Taleb, that God had manifestly showed his disapprobation of the league which the Koreish had made against them, by sending a worm to eat out every word of the instrument except the name of God. Of this accident Mohammed had probably some private notice, for Abu Taleb went immediately to the Koreish, and acquainted them with it, offering, if it proved false, to deliver



his nephew up to them; but, in case it were true, he insisted that they ought to lay aside their animosity, and annul the league they had made against the Hashemites. To this they acquiesced, and, going to inspect the writing, to their great astonishment found it to be as Abu Taleb had said; and the league was thereupon declared void.

‘In the same year Abu Taleb died, at the age of above foreshore; and it is the general opinion that he died an infidel, though others say, that when he was at the point of death he embraced Mohammedism, and produce some passages out of his poetical compositions to confirm their assertion. About a month, or, as some write, three days after the death of this great benefactor and patron, Mohammed had the additional mortification to lose his wife Khadijah, who had so generously made his fortune. For which reason this year is called the year of mourning.

‘On the death of these two persons, the Koreish began to be more troublesome than ever to their prophet, and especially some who had formerly been his intimate friends; insomuch that he found himself obliged to seek for shelter elsewhere, and first pitched upon Tâyef, about sixty miles east from Mecca, for the place of his retreat. Thither therefore he went, accompanied by his servant Zeid, and applied himself to two of the chief of the tribe of Thakîf, who were the inhabitants of that place, but they received him very coldly. However, he stayed there a month; and some of the more considerate and better sort of men treated him with a little respect; but the slaves and inferior people at length rose against him, and bringing him to the wall of the city, obliged him to depart, and return to Mecca, where he put himself under the protection of al Motâam Ebn Adi.

‘This repulse greatly discouraged his followers: however, Mohammed was not wanting to himself, but boldly continued to preach to the public assem-

blies at the pilgrimage, and gained several proselytes, and among them six of the inhabitants of Yathreb of the Jewish tribe of Khazraj, who, on their return home, failed not to speak much in commendation of their new religion, and exhorted their fellow-citizens to embrace the same.

‘In the twelfth year of his mission it was that Mohammed gave out that he had made his night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to heaven, so much spoken of by all that write of him. Dr Prideaux thinks he invented it either to answer the expectations of those who demanded some miracle as a proof of his mission; or else, by pretending to have conversed with God, to establish the authority of whatever he should think fit to leave behind by way of oral tradition, and make his sayings to serve the same purpose as the oral law of the Jews. But I do not find that Mohammed himself ever expected so great a regard should be paid to his sayings as his followers have since done and seeing he all along disclaimed any power of performing miracles, it seems rather to have been a fetch of policy to raise his reputation, by pretending to have actually conversed with God in heaven, as Moses had heretofore on the mount, and to have received several institutions immediately from him, whereas before he contented himself with persuading them that he had all by the ministry of Gabriel.

‘However, this story seemed so absurd and incredible that several of his followers left him upon it, and it had probably ruined the whole design, had not Abu Becr vouched for its veracity, and declared that if Mohammed affirmed it to be true, he verily believed the whole. Which happy incident not only retrieved the prophet’s credit, but increased it to such a degree, that he was secure of being able to make his disciples swallow whatever he pleased to impose on them for the future. And I am apt to

think this fiction, notwithstanding its extravagance, was one of the most artful contrivances Mohammed ever put in practice, and what chiefly contributed to the raising of his reputation to that great height to which it afterwards arrived.

‘ In this year, called by the Mohammedans the accepted year, twelve men of Yathreb or Medina, of whom ten were of the tribe of Khazraj, and the other two of that of Aws, came to Mecca, and took an oath of fidelity to Mohammed at al Akaba, a hill on the north of that city. This oath was called the women’s oath; not that any women were present at this time, but because a man was not thereby obliged to take up arms in defence of Mohammed or his religion; it being the same oath that was afterwards exacted of the women, the form of which we have in the Koran, and is to this effect; viz, ‘ That they should renounce all idolatry; that they should not steal, nor commit fornication, nor kill their children, (as the pagan Arabs used to do when they apprehended they should not be able to maintain them,) nor forge calumnies; and that they should obey the prophet in all things that were reasonable.’ When they had solemnly engaged to do all this, Mohammed sent one of his disciples, named Masāb Ebn Omair, home with them, to instruct them more fully in the grounds and ceremonies of his new religion.

‘ Masāb being arrived at Medina, by the assistance of those who had been formerly converted, gained several proselytes, particularly Osaid Ebn Hodeira, a chief man of the city, and Saad Ebn Moādh, prince of the tribe of Aws; Mohammedism spreading so fast, that there was scarcely a house wherein there were not some who had embraced it.

‘ The next year, being the thirteenth of Mohammed’s mission, Masāb returned to Mecca, accompanied by seventy-three men and two women of Medina, who had professed Islamism, besides some

others who were as yet unbelievers. On their arrival, they immediately sent to Mohammed, and offered him their assistance, of which he was now in great need, for his adversaries were by this time grown so powerful in Mecca, that he could not stay there much longer without imminent danger. Wherefore he accepted their proposal, and met them one night, by appointment, at al Akaba above mentioned, attended by his uncle al Abbas, who, though he was not then a believer, wished his nephew well, and made a speech to those of Medina wherein he told them, that as Mohammed was obliged to quit his native city, and seek an asylum elsewhere, and they had offered him their protection, they would do well not to deceive him; and that if they were not firmly resolved to defend and not betray him, they had better declare their minds, and let him provide for his safety in some other manner. Upon their protesting their sincerity, Mohammed swore to be faithful to them; on condition that they should protect him against all insults, as heartily as they would their own wives and families. They then asked him what recompense they were to expect, if they should happen to be killed in his quarrel: he answered, paradise. Whereupon they pledged their faith to him, and so returned home, after Mohammed had chosen twelve out of their number, who were to have the same authority among them as the twelve apostles of Christ had among his disciples.

‘Hitherto Mohammed had propagated his religion by fair means, so that the whole success of his enterprise before his flight to Medina, must be attributed to persuasion only, and not to compulsion. For, before this second oath of fealty or inauguration at al Akaba, he had no permission to use any force at all; and in several places of the Koran, which he pretended were revealed during his stay at Mecca, he declares his business was only to preach and ad-



monish; that he had no authority to compel any person to embrace his religion; and that whether people believed, or not, was none of his concern, but belonged solely unto God. And he was so far from allowing his followers to use force, that he exhorted them to bear patiently those injuries which were offered them on account of their faith; and when persecuted himself, he chose rather to quit the place of his birth and retire to Medina, than to make any resistance. But this great passiveness and moderation seems entirely owing to his want of power, and the great superiority of his opposers for the first twelve years of his mission; for no sooner was he enabled, by the assistance of those of Medina, to make head against his enemies, than he gave out, that God had allowed him and his followers to defend themselves against the infidels; and at length, as his forces increased, he pretended to have the Divine leave even to attack them, and to destroy idolatry, and set up the true faith by the sword; finding, by experience, that his designs would otherwise proceed very slowly, if they were not utterly overthrown; and knowing, on the other hand, that innovators, when they depend solely on their own strength, and can compel, seldom run any risk; from whence, the politician observes, it follows, that all the armed prophets have succeeded, and the unarmed ones have failed. Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, and Romulus would not have been able to establish the observance of their institutions for any length of time, had they not been armed. The first passage of the Koran which gave Mohammed the permission of defending himself by arms, is said to have been that in the twenty-second chapter; after which, a great number to the same purpose were revealed.

‘That Mohammed had a right to take up arms for his own defence against his unjust persecutors, may perhaps be allowed; but whether he ought after-



wards to have made use of that means for the establishing of his religion, is a question I will not here determine. How far the secular power may or ought to interpose in affairs of this nature, mankind are not agreed. The method of converting by the sword, gives no very favorable idea of the faith which is so propagated, and is disallowed by every body in those of another religion, though the same persons are willing to admit of it for the advancement of their own; supposing, that though a false religion ought not to be established by authority, yet a true one may; and accordingly, force is almost as constantly employed in these cases by those who have the power in their hands, as it is constantly complained of by those who suffer the violence. It is certainly one of the most convincing proofs that Mohammedism was no other than a human invention, that it owed its progress and establishment almost entirely to the sword; and it is one of the strongest demonstrations of the Divine original of Christianity, that it prevailed against all the force and powers of the world by the mere dint of its own truth, after having stood the assaults of all manner of persecutions, as well as other oppositions, for three hundred years together, and at length made the Roman emperors themselves submit thereto; after which time indeed this proof seems to fail, Christianity being then established, and paganism abolished by public authority, which has had great influence in the propagation of the one, and destruction of the other, ever since. But to return.

‘Mohammed having provided for the security of his companions as well as his own, by the league offensive and defensive which he had now concluded with those of Medina, directed them to repair thither, which they accordingly did; but himself, with Abu Beer and Ali, staid behind, having not yet received the Divine permission, as he pretended, to leave Mecca. The Koreish, fearing the consequence of this

new alliance, began to think it absolutely necessary to prevent Mohammed's escape to Medina, and having held a council thereon, after several milder expedients had been rejected, they came to a resolution that he should be killed; and they agreed that a man should be chosen out of every tribe for the execution of this design, and that each man should have a blow at him with his sword, that the guilt of his blood might fall equally on all the tribes, to whose united power the Hashemites were much inferior; and therefore durst not attempt to revenge their kinsman's death.\*

By some means or other, this conspiracy came to Mohammed's knowledge, and he contrived to withdraw with Abubeker and two attendants to a cave in Mount Thâr, to the S.E. of Mekka, where he lay hid for three days, and by this means baffled the pursuit of the conspirators.\* At length, he effected his escape to Medinah, where he soon found himself strong enough to make reprisals on the Koreishites. 'But what established his affairs very much, and was the foundation on which he built all his succeeding greatness, was the gaining of the battle of Beder, in the second year of the Hejira.' We must refer to Gibbon's florid paragraphs for the details of this famous victory, and the more doubtful combat which ensued, in which the prophet was wounded in the face. A third time the Koreish appeared before the walls of Medinah, with an army of 10,000 men; but Mohammed had strongly entrenched himself, by the aid, as it is said, of Salmân the Persian; and after the siege had been protracted for twenty days, quarrels

\* We have preferred Sale's circumstantial and homely narrative to Gibbon's more highly embellished account. At the close of each evening, it is added, they received from the son and daughter of Abubeker, a secret supply of intelligence and food. 'We are only two,' said the trembling Abubeker. 'There is a third,' replied the prophet; 'it is God himself.'

broke out among the auxiliaries, which, together with a violent tempest, led to the breaking up and dispersion of the assailant army: the Koreish, deserted by their allies, found themselves unable to maintain the contest with their invincible exile.

From his establishment at Medinah, Mohammed assumed the exercise of the regal and pontifical functions. Having purchased a small portion of ground, he built a house and mosque, where, with his back against a palm-tree, and afterwards in a rough, unadorned pulpit, he declaimed in the weekly assembly against the idolatry of his nation. In the sixth year of the Hejira, he set out with fourteen hundred men, but with the most peaceable professions, to visit the temple of Mekka; but, when he reached the limits of the sacred territory, the Koreish sent him word, that they would not permit him to enter Mekka. On this, he had resolved to attack the city, when a second embassy arrived at the camp with proposals for a ten years' truce.\* One stipulation, however, on the part of Mohammed was, that he should be permitted to enter the city as a friend the following year, and remain there three days to accomplish the rites of the pilgrimage. Accordingly, the next year, the Koreish retired to the hills, while the pilgrims of Medinah performed the accustomed rites, and Mohammed kept his word by evacuating the city on the fourth day. The ambassador from Mekka, Sohail Ebn Amru, who concluded the treaty, is said to have reported, that he had seen the Chosroes of Persia, and the Cæsar of Rome, but had never beheld any

\* The occasion of this peaceful embassy is said to have been this. 'Fourscore of the infidels came privately to Mohammed's camp at al Hodeibiya, with an intent to surprise some of his men, but were taken and brought before the prophet, who pardoned them, and set them at liberty; and this generous action was the occasion of the truce struck up by the Koreish with Mohammed.' — SALE's *Koran*, chap. xlviii.

prince among his subjects so highly venerated as Mohammed was among his companions ; for, when he made his ablutions, they ran and caught the water, they collected his very spittle, and treasured up every hair that fell from him with abject superstition. To make amends to his followers for the failure of this first expedition against Mekka, about a month after his return to Medinah, he led some of his followers against the Jews of Khaibar. He appears already to have found out, that an Arab soldiery could be attached to his cause only by the hope of plunder. Gibbon remarks, that his choice of Jerusalem for the first *kebla* of prayer, discovers his early predilection for the Jews ; but their obstinate opposition converted his friendship into implacable hatred. The tribe of Kainoka who dwelt at Medinah, first felt his power. On the occasion of an accidental tumult, they were expelled the city, after an obstinate contest, and ‘ a wretched colony of 700 exiles, with their wives and children, were driven to implore a refuge on the confines of Syria.’ The Nadhirites having conspired to assassinate the prophet in a friendly interview, he laid siege to their castle, distant three miles from Medinah ; but their resolute defence obtained for them an honourable capitulation. The Koraidhites had excited and joined the war of the Koreish : the atrocious vengeance taken on them by Mohammed is a dreadful stain upon his character. Seven hundred Jews were dragged in chains to the market-place of the city, and there massacred, their remains being ignominiously thrown into one common grave, and their sheep, camels, and arms were divided among the Moslems.\* Khaibar, an ancient town six days’

\* Moslem, signifying a professor of Eslam, or Islamism, (*i. e.* the religion of Mohamuned) makes Muselman in the dual, and Muselmion in the plural ; but the legitimate plural in English is Moslems, though usage has sanctioned Muselmans.

journey to the N.E. of Medinah, was the metropolis of the Arabian Jews, and its wealthy territory was protected by eight castles. Mohammed took the field with 200 cavalry and 1,400 foot; the castles were successively ceded to the conqueror, and the inhabitants of Khaibar submitted to accept a precarious toleration, on the condition of an annual tribute of half their revenues. In the khalifate of Omar, the Jews were totally banished from the Peninsula.

In the seventh year from his flight, Mohammed began to entertain the hope of propagating his religion beyond the bounds of Arabia, and sent messengers to the neighbouring princes, to invite them to embrace the new faith. The Persian monarch, Khosrû Parviz, received the letter with high disdain, and tearing it in pieces, abruptly dismissed the envoy; but the Emperor Heraclius, the Arabian historians assure us, received the communication at Emesa, in Syria, with great respect; and Mokawkas, Governor of Egypt, sent back several valuable presents by the messenger, — among the rest, two young girls. As for the Ethiopian monarch, he is said to have already been converted. Al Mondar Ibn Sawa, King of Bahrein, and Badhan, King of Yemen, embraced Mohammedism with all their subjects; but the Christian king of Yamâma returned a very rough answer; and Hareth, King of Ghassan, sent word that he would go to Mohammed himself. The Arabian messenger to the Governor of Bosra,\* was slain by a Christian emir named Sherheil al Mutar, in the district of Belka, about three days' journey east of Jerusalem. Being tributaries of the Greek emperor, these Syrians are styled Grecians. To avenge this insult, Mo-

Islam is said to mean devotion, or the total resignation of body and soul to God.

\* Bosra was the capital of the kingdom of Ghassan. Possibly, this same Hareth is here referred to.



hammed sent 3,000 Moslems to invade the Syrian territory; and in the battle of Mubah, the valour of the fanatics was first tried in an encounter with a foreign enemy. The Syro-Roman army being greatly superior in numbers, the Arabians were repulsed in the first attack, and successively lost their three generals, Zeid Ebn Haretha, Mohammed's freedman, Jaafar, the son of Abu Taleb, and Abdallah Ebn Rawâha. 'Advance,' exclaimed Abdallah, as his predecessor fell, 'victory or paradise is ours.' The lance of a Roman deprived him of the first; but the falling standard was rescued by Khaled Ebn al Walid, a proselyte of Mekka, and his valour sustained the conflict till night closed upon the combatants. The next morning, his skilful evolutions struck a panic into the enemy, and secured, if not a victory, a safe retreat: the Mohammedan historians say, that Khaled returned to Medinah with rich spoil.

In this same year (the eighth) Mohammed gained possession of his native city. The Koreish are accused of having been the first to violate the truce;\* but, however this may have been, the pretence was eagerly seized for invading their territory with an army 10,000 strong. Taken by surprise, the people of Mekka surrendered at discretion, and Abu Sofian, the governor, saved his life by turning Moslem. The soldiers of the prophet were eager for plunder or for vengeance, and eight and twenty inhabitants perished by the sword of Khaled; but Mohammed blamed this act of cruelty, and pardoned all the Koreish on their submission,† except six men and four women; and of these, only three men and one

\* See Sale, Prel. Disc. § 2.

† 'The chiefs of the Koreish were prostrate at his feet. "What mercy can you expect from the man whom you have wronged?" "We confide in the generosity of our kinsman," "And you shall not confide in vain." — GIBBON.

woman were actually put to death. Thus, 'after an exile of seven years, the fugitive missionary was enthroned as the prince and prophet of his native country.' The three hundred and sixty idols of the Kaaba were now cast out and ignominiously broken, and the temple of Saturn, or Abraham, was changed from a pantheon into a sanctuary of Islam. The conquest of Mekka determined the faith and obedience of most of the Bedoween tribes; but an obstinate remnant still adhered to the paganism of their ancestors, and the Hanazanites and the citizens of Tayef made a powerful stand in the field of Honain. The victory was at first doubtful, and in the end sanguinary. Ultimately, the people of Tayef submitted to the demolition of their temples, and the same sentence of destruction was executed on all the idols of Arabia. 'On the shores of the Red Sea, the Ocean, and the Persian Gulf, his lieutenants were saluted by the acclamations of a faithful people, and the ambassadors who knelt before the throne of Medinah, were as numerous, says the Arabian proverb, as the dates that fall from the maturity of a palm-tree. The nation submitted to the God and the sceptre of Mohammed; the opprobrious name of tribute was abolished; the spontaneous or reluctant oblation of tithes and alms were applied to the service of religion; and 114,000 Moslems accompanied the last pilgrimage of the apostle.' The kingdom or province of Yemâma alone, where a competitor for the prophetic or pontifical office had started up in Moseilama, presented an exception, during the last years of Mohammed, to the national uniformity: the schismatics were not reduced to obedience till the khalifate of Abubeker. In the full possession of power, the Arabian pontiff now projected the invasion of Syria, and actually proceeded, at the head of an army of 10,000 horse, 20,000 foot, and 12,000 camels, as far as the grove and fountain of Tabouk,

on the road to Damascus; but here, a council of war determined on the abandonment of the enterprise, owing, as it would seem, to the desertions which had taken place among the troops, in consequence of the intolerable heat of the season, and the want of skill or foresight in the *commissariat* department. But the terrors of his name produced the submission of the Syrian tribes, from Euphrates to the head of the Red Sea.

Till the age of sixty-three years, the strength of Mohammed was equal to the fatigues of his twofold office; but, during the last four years, his health declined. He believed that he was poisoned at Khairbar by a Jewish female. His mortal disease was a bilious fever of fourteen days, which deprived him at intervals of his reason. As soon as he was conscious of his danger, he enfranchised his slaves, and minutely directed the order of his funeral. Till the third day before his death, he performed the function of public prayer; and when he was so ill as to enter the mosque resting on the shoulders of his servants, he ordered his ancient and faithful friend Abubeker to read the service in his stead: but he prudently declined, except so far as this act might so be construed, to nominate his successor. One daughter alone, of all his children, survived him. To the last moment, he maintained the faith of an enthusiast, or supported the character of an impostor; he described the visits of Gabriel, who then bade an everlasting farewell to the earth, and expressed his lively confidence of the favour of the Almighty. In the agony of dissolution, his head reclining on the lap of Ayesha, his favourite wife, he uttered the last broken but articulate words, 'O God, pardon my sins. Ah! my companion, I attend thee to the realms above.' He was buried at Medinah, and the pilgrims to Mekka turn aside to pay their devotions at the simple tomb of their prophet.

Sale, the Translator of the Koran, has made the best apology for the character of this extraordinary man. 'His original design of bringing the pagan Arabs to the knowledge of the true God, was certainly,' he remarks, 'noble and highly to be commended. Mohammed was, no doubt, fully satisfied in his conscience of the truth of his grand point, the unity of God, which was what he chiefly attended to, all his other doctrines and institutions being accidental, rather than premeditated. The damage done to Christianity seems to have been owing to his ignorance, rather than to his malice; for his great misfortune was, his not having a competent knowledge of the real and pure doctrines of the Christian religion, which was in his time so abominably corrupted, that it is not surprising if he went too far, and resolved to abolish what he might think incapable of reformation.' Till the age of forty, his character remained unblemished; and the solitary of Mount Hera would have died without a name. Gibbon remarks, that 'from enthusiasm to imposture, the step is perilous and slippery, and the demon of Socrates affords a memorable instance how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self-illusion and voluntary fraud.' It may be questioned whether this remark will bear the test of analysis. That enthusiasm, at least, which has truth for its object, and faith for its source, is incapable of alliance with fraud, although a man may begin an enthusiast, and end an impostor. It may be doubted, however, whether Mohammed can justly be characterised as an enthusiast: the time of life at which he first developed his project, and the cautious steps by which he proceeded, oppose this idea. Whatever were his ultimate views or motives, the means by which he sought to attain his end, were characterised by deliberate imposition. Yet, when we call to mind the apocryphal gospels of the first centuries,



and the pious frauds and lying miracles of those who called themselves ministers of Christ, we must admit that the Arabian prophet dealt by no means more largely in imposture, than many of the saints in the Romish calendar, and he was certainly a far more respectable man. Gibbon's sarcasm is but too well founded. 'The injustice of Mekka and the choice of Medinah,' he says, 'transformed the citizen into a prince, the humble preacher' into the leader of armies; but his sword was consecrated by the example of the saints.\* His private life was not unamiable. Simple in his manners, frugal in his diet, affectionate in the relations of life, the lord of Arabia despised the pomp of royalty: he milked the ewes, kindled his own fire, and mended, with his own hands, his shoes and coarse woollen garment. Dates and water were his usual fare: honey and milk his luxuries. The prohibition of wine was enforced by his example. When he travelled, he divided his morsel with his servant. The sincerity of his exhortations to benevolence, was testified at his death, by the exhausted state of his coffers. He was affected to tears when the sword of an enemy sundered the bands of friendship: and his feeling of gratitude to Kadijah, neither time nor the death of his benefactress could eradicate.† So long as she lived, his conjugal fidelity was unimpeached; but when death terminated a union

\* It suited Gibbon's purpose to confound the saints of a paganised Christianity with the saints of the New Testament. We suppress the blasphemous insinuation which follows.

† 'Was not Kadijah old?' inquired Ayesha, with the insolence of a blooming beauty; 'and has not God given you a better in her place?' — 'No,' replied Mohammed, 'there never was a kinder or better woman. She believed in me when men despised me; she relieved my wants when I was poor and persecuted by the world: she was all devotion to my cause.'



of more than twenty-five years' duration, and the sunshine of prosperity beamed upon him, licentious principles were kindled, which ill accorded with his assumed character; and his vilest falsehoods were the revelations by which he sought to excuse these sometimes unpremeditated departures from morality. The doctrine of indulgences would have precluded the necessity of Gabriel's communications on this subject. As a conqueror, more especially as an Asiatic conqueror, he might be esteemed clement, were it not for the signal vengeance taken on the Koraidhite Jews; which is the more remarkable, as a similar act of cruelty is the subject of execration in the Koran. So closely did Mohammed imitate, in this instance, the conduct of the Jewish persecutor towards the Christians of Nedjeraun, that he might seem to have been guided by the principle of retaliation. But the outcasts of Israel have met with similar treatment at every hand, Pagan, Christian, and Moslem: and the flames of the Inquisition awaited those whom Mohammed spared, and Omar only exiled. One decree of the Arabian legislator appears to have been dictated by genuine humanity: he enacted that, in the sale of captives, the infant should not be separated from the mother. It is a pity that the West India colonists are not Mohammedans.

Fairly to appreciate the character of Mohammed, it would be requisite to have better information than is now accessible, as to the degree of religious knowledge which he possessed, and the sources from which he obtained it. The composition of the Koran, as regards the language, was probably his own dictation; but whence did he acquire his knowledge of the Old Testament histories and Jewish traditions? His family, his fellow-citizens were pagans: how came he to conceive his abhorrence of idolatry, his Jewish belief in the unity of God, his almost Christian notions of prayer? The Jewish religion was, indeed,

widely disseminated in Arabia; and he might have frequent opportunities of conversing with those who traded to Mekka; but how came he to go so far beyond his Jewish teachers, as to honour Christ? And how did he know that the Christians were open to the charge which he brings against them, that 'they take their priests and their monks for their lords besides God, and Christ the Son of Mary, although they are commanded to worship God only.'\* He had probably never seen a copy of the New Testament; yet, he refers to the Gospel;† places the believers in Jesus above the Jewish unbelievers;‡ and constantly represents the Koran as 'a confirmation of those Scriptures which have been revealed before it.'§ Was he then a Christian to the extent of his knowledge of Christianity? Were we to admit this, we must add, that his knowledge was so imperfect as to embrace none of its distinguishing doctrines: he was not a believer in 'Christ crucified.'

'The Mohammedans,' remarks the Abbé Fleury, 'are neither atheists nor idolaters. On the contrary, their religion, false as it is, hath many principles in common with the true one. They believe in one God Almighty, Creator of all, just and merciful; they abhor polytheism and idolatry; they hold the immortality of the soul, a final judgment, a heaven and a hell, angels good and bad, and even guardian angels; they acknowledge a universal deluge; they honour the patriarch Abraham as the father and first author of their religion; they hold Moses and Christ to have been great prophets sent from God, and the Law and

\* Koran, chap. ix.

† Ibid, chap. iii. 'O ye to whom the Scriptures have been given, why do ye dispute concerning Abraham, since the Law and the Gospel were not sent down till after him? Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; but he was of the true religion, one resigned unto God, and not of the number of the idolaters.'

‡ Chap. iii.

§ Chap. xii, towards the end.

the Gospel to be sacred books.' To this may be added, that, in contrast with the corrupt system of doctrine which to a great extent Islamism displaced, it has, in many respects, the advantage. Nay, it may be said to have embodied more truth and less error than the Romish superstition in its vulgar form. Saladin's was a more Christian faith than that of Cœur de Lion, and Mekka was the scene of a purer worship than Rome. Wherever Mohammedism spread, it expelled idolatry: the pseudo-Christianity adopted and perpetuated it. The Moslems denounced and sometimes extirpated the image-worshippers: the orthodox, on the plea of heresy, destroyed their brethren. The religion of the Koran, sensual as are the future rewards it holds out to the faithful, was more spiritual than that which dealt in absolutions and indulgences: the former postponed at least the gratification of the passions to a future state, while the latter let them loose in this. Nor were the pretensions of Mohammed more impious than those of the Pope: the Arabian impostor promised paradise to the faithful; the Roman pontiff sold heaven to the highest bidder, and fixed a price on the pains of hell. The morality of the Koran was far purer, too, than that of the canons; and finally, the devotion of the mosque brought the Moslem into far more intimate communion with the idea of Deity, — partook more of the character of worship, than the unmeaning ceremonials of the Romish demonolatry. In Spain, the two systems came fairly into opposition; and who would not prefer to have lived under the splendid dominion of the Moorish sovereigns of Granada, rather than under their Gothic contemporaries, or in the later days of Ferdinand and Isabella, or Charles the Fifth? Had the Arabian empire been but able to maintain itself in Spain, as the Turkish lords of Greece have been suffered to reign at the other extremity of Europe, the Inquisition would

never have kindled its flames, and the progress of the Reformation in the Peninsula would have had less to contend against.

Had the Christianity of that age corresponded to the faith of the New Testament, it must have been morally impossible that it should yield to either the Koran or the sword of Mohammed. The Koran, a book that will not endure the test of translation,\* so exclusively do its beauties consist in its diction, — this clumsy revelation, so little in harmony with the Scriptures to which it pretends to be an appendix, so deficient in all the characters of a Divine record, so little adapted to universal circulation, — contemptible in any language but the Arabic,† — cannot stand before the Bible. To bring them into comparison would be to insult the majesty of inspired truth. ‘Of all creeds,’ it has been justly remarked, ‘Islam has been found the least compatible with philosophy. The Koran cannot bear inspection. And here the adage of infidelity is true; for the Moslem, when they begin to reason, will cease to believe.’‡

The reader will pardon this digression. In presenting even a sketch of Arabian history, it cannot be

\* ‘The harmony and copiousness of style will not reach, in a version, the European infidel: he will peruse with impatience the endless, incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declamation, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dust, and is sometimes lost in the clouds. The Divine attributes exalt the fancy of the Arabian missionary; but his loftiest strains must yield to the sublime simplicity of the book of Job, composed in a remote age, in the same country, and in the same language. If the composition of the Koran exceed the faculties of a man, to what superior intelligence should we ascribe the *Iliad* of Homer, or the *Philippics* of Demosthenes?’ — GIBBON.

† It has, however, been translated (or part of it) into the Chinese, the Malay, and the Macassar languages, and probably some other dialects of Eastern Asia; but the Mohammedans of those countries are, for the most part, idolaters.

‡ Douglas’s *Hints on Missions*, p. 82.

thought irrelevant to take this general view of the moral phenomenon which had its rise in that country, — the religion not of the Arabians only, but of the Persians, the Syrians, the Tartars, the Turks, the Moors of Tripoli, and Barbary, and Spain, the Saracens of Egypt, the inhabitants of the Indian peninsula, of the Malayan Archipelago, and the remotest tribes of eastern Asia. The subsequent annals of Mohammedism will not long detain us, as they soon cease to be identified with the history of Arabia.

On the death of Mohammed, the *mohaujerein* (fugitives) of Mekka, and the *ansaur* (auxiliaries) of Medinah, contended for the privilege of electing his successor. The birth, the alliance, and the character of Ali, the son of Abu Taleb and the husband of Fatima, the prophet's only surviving child, gave him the strongest claim to the vacant throne. He was the head of the family of Hashem, and, as such, the hereditary prince of Mekka, and guardian of the Kaaba. He is said, moreover, to have united in himself, the qualifications of a poet, a hero, and a saint; his eloquence was equal to his valour; and Mohammed had delighted to style him his brother, his viceroy, his Aaron. But the jealousy of the Koreish and the spirit of faction led to the disregard of his claims. It was at first proposed to choose two khalifs, — a measure which would have been fatal to the nascent empire; but Omar, on being nominated by Abubeker, avowed his inability to discharge so weighty a trust, and renouncing his own pretensions, declared himself the first subject of the mild and venerable Abubeker. The rival cities united in their allegiance to the new sovereign; the Hashemites alone declined the oath of fidelity, and their chief maintained in his own house for some months, a sullen and independent reserve, in spite of Omar's threat that he would set fire to it. The death of Fatima at length subdued the indignant spirit of Ali;



and at the mild remonstrance of Abubeker, who is said to have even offered to abdicate in his favour, he consented to waive all further opposition, and to unite against the common enemy. The death of the prophet was the signal to the restless and independent tribes of pagan Arabs who had submitted with reluctance to this new religion, to shake off the yoke. Abubeker found himself reduced to the cities of Mekka, Medinah, and Tayef; and even the Koreish showed a disposition to restore the idols of the Kaaba. By the vigorous measures, however, which were taken by Abubeker, and the valour of Khaled, the unconnected tribes of the desert were soon reclaimed to obedience, and the appearance of a military force revived the loyalty of the wavering.\* But in Yemâma, Moseilama hoisted his rival standard, and, supported by the tribe of Hanifah, was sufficiently formidable to require that Khaled should take the field against him at the head of 40,000 men. In the first action, the Moslems were defeated with the loss of 1,200 men; but their defeat was avenged by the

\* The circular letter of Abubeker ran as follows: 'In the name of the most merciful God; to the rest of the true believers, health and happiness, and the blessing of God be upon you. I praise the most high God, and I pray for his prophet Mohammed. This is to acquaint you, that I intend to send the true believers into Syria, to take it out of the hands of the infidels. And I would have you know, that the fighting for religion is an act of obedience to God.' The khalif's directions to his general do him honour: 'When you meet your enemies, quit yourselves like men, and do not turn your backs; and if you get the victory, kill no little children, nor old people, nor women. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn: cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill for subsistence.' The troops are ordered to respect the inmates of monasteries. But 'you will find another sort of people,' it is added, 'that belong to the synagogues of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mohammedans, or pay tribute.' — MILLS's *History*, pp. 48 — 50.

slaughter of 10,000 infidels, and Moseilama himself received from a javelin a mortal wound. The various rebel chiefs, left without a leader, were speedily reduced to submission, and the whole nation were soon united by the desire of foreign conquest. On the summons of Abubeker, a large army assembled round Medinah, the command of which was given to Yezid Ebn Abu Sofian. A second army, destined for the subjugation of Palestine, was raised through the enthusiasm inspired by the successes of the first, and Amrou was nominated the general. Thus Khaled was again passed by; but that ferocious Moslem was ultimately sent to co-operate with Abu Obeidah, to whom Yezid had resigned his charge. The fall of Bosra, which was hastened by the treachery of the Roman governor, opened the way to Damascus. The battle of Aiznadin, in July 633, in which 50,000 Christians and infidels are said to have been slain, decided the fate of the capital of Syria. Emesa and Baalbek were taken the following year, and the Syro-Grecians made a last and ineffectual stand in the open field, on the banks of the Hieromax. Jerusalem sustained a siege of four months, at the end of which, the patriarch Sophronius obtained, as a term of capitulation, the honour of delivering up the holy city to the Khalif Omar in person, who had quietly succeeded to the sceptre bequeathed to him by Abubeker. Leaving Ali as his lieutenant, the Commander of the Faithful set out on his red camel for Jerusalem, with a few attendants, and equipped more like a prophet than a sovereign. The gates were opened to him on his arrival, and the patriarchs of Christendom and Islam entered the holy city together in familiar discourse concerning the antiquities of the place. The conquest of Aleppo, A. D. 638, after a tedious and bloody siege, and that of Antioch which followed, completed the subjugation of Syria. The fall of Alexandria before the forces of Amrou, decided the

fate of Egypt in the same year. The battle of Kadesia, two stations from Kufah, and the capture of Medaein (Ctesiphon) had already made the Moslems the masters of Persia almost to the banks of the Oxus. In the twenty-third year of the Hejira, Omar received a mortal wound from the hand of an assassin. He left the appointment of his successor to the discretion of six commissioners, who offered the khalifate to Ali, one of their number, but, as it would seem, with restrictions which he disdained; and Othman, the secretary of Mohammed, accepted the government.

‘The unlimited obedience of the Moslems to Abubeker and Omar, was not continued to Othman. His partiality to his family, his appropriation of the public money to the use of his friends, and his presuming to sit in the highest seat of the pulpit, though Abubeker and Omar had occupied only the first or the second step, were the real or alleged crimes which prompted the Arabs to shake off their allegiance. The oppressed and the factious subjects of the khalif in Egypt, Syria, and Persia, assembled in the neighbourhood of Medinah, and demanded justice. The khalif satisfied all their requisitions, but the malignant and ambitious spirit of Ayesha was not readily appeased. She wished the throne to be filled by one of her own partisans, and she secretly assisted all the machinations of the rebels. A mandate, forged in the khalif’s hand-writing, for the murder of the Egyptian lieutenant whom he had been compelled to name, was placed within the reach of the deputies from Egypt: the torch of civil discord was lighted once more, and the insurgents besieged the injured Othman in his palace. Hassan and Hossein, the sons of Ali, protected him awhile; and some remains of respect for a legitimate successor of the prophet, suspended his fate. But the animosity of the rebels strengthened; the gates of the palace were forced; the chief conspirators entered the apartment in which

the khalif was seated studying the Koran, and the blood of his faithful attendants was shed in vain in defending their venerable chief from his enemies.\*

The murderers of Othman offered the vacant khalifate to Ali, but he refused to accept it till the popular voice had ratified the election. At the hour of prayer, he repaired to the mosque at Medinah, clad in a thin cotton gown, a coarse turban on his head, his slippers in one hand, and a bow, instead of a staff, in the other. The chiefs of the tribes saluted their new sovereign, and gave him their right hand in token of fealty. Thus twenty-four years after the death of Mohammed, his son-in law was invested with what seemed his rightful inheritance. But short and tumultuous was his reign. Moawiyah, the son of Abu Sofiah, possessed the affections of the army of Syria, and the various lieutenants throughout the empire refused to recognise the authority of Ali. The pretence for insurrection was, that the murder of Othman remained unavenged. The bloody shirt of the late khalif was suspended over the pulpit at Damascus, and 60,000 Saracens were seduced from their allegiance to become the instruments of faction. Two powerful chieftains, Telha and Zobeir, irritated, it is said, by Ali's refusing to confer on them the governorships of Kufah and Bassora, escaped into Irâk, accompanied by the widow of the prophet, where they erected the standard of revolt. At the head of 20,000 loyal Arabs, Ali marched from Medinah to Bassora, and being joined at Kufah by 10,000 auxiliaries, encountered and defeated the superior numbers of the rebels. Telha and Zobeir were both slain, and the guilty and perfidious Ayesha was led a captive into the tent of Ali, who respectfully dismissed her to her proper station at the tomb

\* Mill's History of Muhammedanism, pp. 89, 9.

of the prophet, under the guard of his two sons, Hassan and Hossein.

Established at Kufah, the Commander of the Faithful received the submission of Egypt, Arabia, Persia, and Khorassan; but he was speedily summoned to the field by a more powerful foe. The army of Syria proclaimed Moawiyah khalif, denouncing Ali as the murderer of Othman. In the course of 110 days, 90 battles or skirmishes took place between the hostile armies in the plains of Seffeyn. Five and forty thousand of the partisans of Moawiyah, and twenty-five thousand of the soldiers of Ali, fell in this civil war. 'The cousin of Mohammed, with a generosity rare in Asiatic princes, commanded his troops invariably to await the attack, to spare the fugitives, and to respect the virtue of the female captives. Nor was his valour less conspicuous than his humanity. "How long," said Ali to Moawiyah, "shall the people lose their lives in our controversies? I challenge you to appeal to the decision of God and the sword." But his adversary declined this test of their merits, for the personal prowess of Ali was proverbial in the army. In the morning, after a nocturnal battle, the victory of Ali appeared no longer doubtful; but a stratagem of Amrou, the conqueror of Egypt and friend of Moawiyah, deceived the soldiers of the lawful khalif. The Koran was hoisted on the points of the lances of the Syrian soldiers, and the cry was repeated, that that book ought to decide all differences. In vain did Ali represent to his Arábs the insidiousness of the appeal: their enthusiasm was excited, they forgot their allegiance, and bowed in veneration before the word of the apostle. The battle was suspended, the armies retired to their several camps and a long negotiation ensued. The authority of Ali declined from day to day; and rebellion, always more rapidly contagious than a pestilence, spread throughout the khalifate. The Charegites,



a sect of religious and political zealots, closed the career of Ali. In the open field he had defeated their force, but three of the fugitives resolved on his murder, in expiation of the death of their comrades. In the disordered imagination of the Charegites, peace would never be restored to their country during the lives of Moawiyah and Amrou. Each of the three confederates chose his victim, and poisoned his dagger.\* The secretary of Amrou received the blow which was meditated for his master; Moawiyah, was severely wounded; but, in the mosque of Kufah, the dagger of the third assassin was plunged into the breast of Ali, and the generous chief died in the sixty-third year of his age, commanding his son not to aggravate the sufferings of the murderer by useless torture. On the death of Ali, his eldest son Hassan was saluted khalif by the Kufians, but Moawiyah was in possession of Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, and the unambitious descendant of Mohammed soon retired to a life of ease and piety at Medinah. But the simple recluse was still an object of jealousy in the eyes of Moawiyah, the supreme lord of the Moslem world. Yezid, the son of the khalif, professed a passion for the wife of Hassan, and instigated her to poison the beloved grandson of the founder of the Saracenian greatness.†

\* This atrocious conspiracy is said to have been formed by the three assassins in the temple of Mekka.

† Mills, pp. 93 — 96. This favourable view of Ali's character has been adopted chiefly on the authority of Abulfeda, the Emir of Hamah, who compares him to Marcus Antonius. Whether it may not savour of *Persian* partiality, might admit of question, if such a question were worth agitating. The Abbé de Marigny, in the preface to his *History of the Arabians*, says, 'I must own I never met with any thing in history to countenance the opinion they would have us entertain of this prince. Not a single act is therein recorded which shows the great man. On the contrary, he appears to be of an unsteady, turbulent disposition, inconsistent in what related to himself,

On the accession of the son of Moawiyah, a feeble attempt was made to reinstate the family of Hashem in the person of Hossein, the surviving son of Ali; but, basely betrayed by his followers, he fell covered with wounds, and his sisters and children were led in chains to Damascus. But Yezid, though advised to extirpate the rival race, discovered a clemency rare in Asiatic despots, and honourably dismissed them to Medinah. The reputed descendants of Ali and Fatima are still numerous in every quarter of the Moslem world. In Arabia, where they form whole villages, they are styled *shercefs* or *seids*; in Syria and Turkey, *emirs*; in Africa, Persia, and India, *seids*. The green turbairis, in some of these countries, assumed by those who do not even pretend to the honour of an hereditary claim; but in Turkey, it is still the great distinction of the descendants of Fatima.\*

and much more unsettled in what concerned others. The very moment the prophet his father-in-law was dead, he began to cabal, in order to obtain the khalifate. He had no sooner ascended the throne, than he quarrelled with every one, so that he was obliged to quit his capital, and fix the seat of the khalifate in another place.' Ali's warlike exploits have been celebrated with Arabian extravagance in the *Khawernamah*, a poem well known in the East. In his last moments, he is said to have confessed that 10,000 individuals had fallen by his hand! It would not be easy to clear him altogether from the charge of favouring the assassination of Othman; and Moawiyah, at least, appears to have acted under the decided conviction of his having been concerned in it. The reader who is disposed to pursue the inquiry, will do well to consult Major Price's *Retrospect of Mahommedan History*, compiled chiefly from original Persian authorities (3 vols. 4to, 1811). See especially vol. i, pp. 188, and 253.

\* In Arabia, the title of *shereefs* is applied to the descendants of Mohammed who are of the military profession; that of *seid*, to those who engage in commerce; but sometimes *shereef* means the descendants of Hossein, and *seid* those of Hassan. — MILLS, p. 101.

For nearly a century (A.D. 661 — 750) the house of Moawiyah, commonly called the dynasty of the Ommiades, continued to enjoy the khalifate; but, in the reign of Merwaun, an insurrection was made in favour of the great-grandson of Abbas, the uncle of the prophet, which terminated in a general massacre of the descendants of Moawiyah. The Ommiades had removed the seat of government from Medinah to Damascus; the first of the Abassides fixed his court at Kufah, whence it was transferred to Haschemiah on the Euphrates; and Almansor, the second prince of the family, erected on the site of that village the magnificent city of Bagdadt. But the undivided khalifate terminated in the early days of the Abassides. Real or nominal descendants of Ali and Fatima had possessed themselves of the thrones of Egypt and Western Africa; and a prince of the Ommiades, who escaped the general massacre of his family, was founder of an independent kingdom in Spain. Thus, the sovereignty of Arabia was lost by the extent and rapidity of foreign conquest.\* From being the seat and centre, it sank into a mere province of the Mohammedan empire; and ‘the Bedoweens of the desert,’ in the language of Gibbon, ‘awakening from their dream of dominion, resumed their old and solitary independence.’

The ancient feud between the friends and enemies of Ali, is still perpetuated in the grand schism of the Mohammedan church, which divides the *shei-ites*, or sectaries, from the *sunnites* or orthodox Moslems, and excites the religious animosity subsisting between the Persians and the Turks. The *shei-ites* (or, as

\* At the end of the first century of the Hejira, the Khalifs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe; and under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended 200 days’ journey from E. to W., from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic.

they call themselves, *adli-ites*) bitterly execrate as usurpers the three khalifs who intercepted the infeasible right of Ali, and the name of Omar is expressive of all that is detestable. The tomb of Ali, near Kufah, has been enriched by the offerings of successive dynasties of barbaric khans and shahs; and 'the twelve imaums,' Ali, his two sons, and the lineal descendants of Hossein to the ninth generation, are the saints and martyrs of the church of Persia. By the *sunmites*, on the contrary, Abubeker, Omar, Othman, and Ali, are alike recognised as legitimate successors of the prophet; but the lowest degree of sanctity is assigned to the husband of Fatima.\*

For five centuries, the family of Abbas reigned with various degrees of authority over the Moslems of the East. Radhi, the twentieth khalif of this dynasty (A.D. 940), was the last who was invested with any considerable power. During the next three centuries, the successors of Mohammed swayed a feeble sceptre. The introduction of a body-guard of Turkish mercenaries by the Khalif Motassem, led to the same species of military oligarchy as that of the prætorian guards of Rome, the mamlouks of Kahira, and the janizaries of Constantinople. About the year 890, the 277th of the Hejira,) a new prophet appeared in the neighbourhood of Kufah, of the name of Karmath, the success of whose preaching threatened Arabia with a new revolution. He announced himself as the reformer of Mohammedism; he denounced the pomps and vanities of the court of Bagdadt, yet relaxed the duties of ablution, fasting, and pilgrimage, and permitted the use of wine and pork. A timid persecution assisted the progress of this new sect. After a bloody conflict, they made themselves masters of the province of Bahrein; Baalbek, Kufah, and Bagdadt, were successively

\* See Mod. Trav., Syria, vol. i, p. 189.

taken and pillaged; and Abu Thaher, the successor of Karmath, led his troops across the desert to the holy city, where 30,000 citizens and strangers were put to the sword, and the black stone of the Kaaba was borne away in triumph; but it was eventually restored. For two centuries, these Karmathians were the scourge of the khalifate, and the state, convulsed to its centre, was never again perfectly settled in peace.\*

At length, towards the middle of the seventh century of the *Hejira* A.D. 1258), the metropolis of Islamism fell into the hands of the grandson of Zingis Khan; and in the Khalif Motassem, the thirty-seventh of his house, who was barbarously murdered, the khalifate of Bagdad expired. The spiritual supremacy was perpetuated for three centuries more, in the second dynasty of the Abassides, but without the slightest vestige of temporal authority; till, when the Emperor Selim conquered Egypt, A.D. 1517, he took captive Mohammed XII, the last of the Abassides, and received from him at Constantinople, the formal renunciation of the khalifate. The keys of the temple of Mekka were also delivered up to the conqueror by the Fatimite shereef; and since then, the ecclesiastical supremacy has, on this doubtful title, attached to the Turkish sultans.

\* Gibbon, c. iii. Mills, p. 168. These Karmathians are supposed to be the same sect that appeared soon after in the north of Persia, under the title of Hussunees (corrupted into assassins), from Hussan Subah, their founder, whose dogmas were a mixture of Mohammedism with the doctrines of the Sooffees. Whether Karmath was the same person as Hussan, does not appear. A different etymology has been given of the word corrupted into *assassins*. However this may be, the founder of this sect is obviously the person described by Volney as the founder of the Ansarians or Anzairies of Syria, who are a shei-ite sect, and the remains, as it would seem, of these Karmathians. — See MOD. TRAV., *Syria*, vol. i, pp. 261 — 273.



From the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century, the history of Arabia exhibits nothing more interesting than the squabbles of petty chieftains, and the rise and fall of different sheikdoms or principalities. But, between sixty and seventy years ago, a new prophet started up in the province of Nedjed, whose sect has rapidly spread, and produced a greater change in the political state of the country, than any event since the time of Mohammed. Abd-ul-Wahheb was born at El Aiâne or Aijana, a town in the district of Darale, in the province of Nedjed el Arud, early in the eighteenth century.\* He was educated at Medinah, and afterwards travelled through Persia, and spent some time at Bassora. He returned to his native country a Mohammedan reformer. 'The province of Nedjed was at this time divided among a multitude of smaller tribes, each governed by its own sheikh. To these, Abd-ul-Wahheb pointed out the abuses which had crept into the Muselman religion, particularly the worshipping of saints, and the use of spirituous liquors, and other exhilarating articles. He reprobated the doctrine of the two sects of the *sunnis*, with respect to the denying that the Koran was either created or existing from all eternity, but admitted it was inspired by God as a guide for the conduct of mankind. However, as the greater part of the sheikhs were *sunnis*, he conciliated them by acknowledging the authority of the sayings of Mohammed."†

\* The *pseudo* Ali Bey (Badhia) places his birth about the year 1720, but on conjecture merely.

† According to the information communicated to Niebuhr by an intelligent Bedoween sheikh, Wahheb denied the inspiration of the Koran. 'He considered Mohammed, Jesus Christ, Moses, and many others respected by the Sunnites, in the character of prophets, as merely great men, whose history might be read with improvement, denying that any book had ever been written by Divine inspiration, or brought down from

Lord Valentia, from whom we take the above account, received from Hajji Abdallah, an avowed Wahhabee, the following statement of their profession of faith: 'There is only one God. He is God, and Mohammed is his prophet. Act according to the Koran and the sayings of Mohammed. It is unnecessary for you to pray for the blessing of God on the prophet oftener than once in your life. You are not to invoke the prophet to intercede with God on your behalf, for his intercession will be of no avail. Do not call on the prophet; call on God alone.'\* These doctrines, we are told, spread rapidly among the several tribes, and gradually led to the recognition of a supreme controlling power in the person of the reformer, which gave him a preponderating influence in the north eastern part of the Peninsula. The sheikhs who did not acknowledge his authority, at length became jealous of his ascendancy, and, under the command of the Sheikh of Lachsa, attacked him in his native city. Abd-ul-Wahheb defended himself successfully, and, on a subsequent occasion, defeated an army of 4,000 men, which had been raised against him. From that time, his cause and his authority continued to extend. Aware what men he had to deal with as his followers, he did not neglect to superadd to the inducements of fanaticism, the temptation of plunder, by declaring that all the property of the unconverted should be confiscated for the use of their conquerors. Numbers, therefore, turned Wahhabees to save their property before he marched against them, and immediately began to put in practice their new principles by attacking and spoiling their neighbours.

One of the most powerful supporters of Wahheb

heaven by the angel Gabriel.' Ali Bey (Badhia), however, maintains that they acknowledge Mohammed to have been a prophet, and the Koran to be the Divine word.

\* Valentia's Travels, 8vo, vol. ii, p. 368.

was the Sheikh of Nedjeraun, named Mékrami. He, too, in his youth, had travelled throughout Arabia, Persia, and India, and returned with liberal principles. The Imaum of Saade intrusted him with the government of Nedjeraun; but scarcely had he been invested with the office, than he threw off his allegiance. By his genius and his valour, Niebuhr says, he had rendered himself formidable, not only to his neighbours, but to distant chieftains. In 1763, he invaded the principality of Abu Arisch, and defeated the shereef, but did not follow up his victory, being recalled by an attack on his own territories by the Sheikh of Kachtan. At another time, he made an irruption into Haschid-u-Bekil, and made himself master of the canton of Sahaun. In 1764, he led his troops across Nedjed, and entered the province of Lachsa, as the ally of Wahheb. Sheikh Mekrami enjoyed the reputation of being a profound theologian as well as a valiant warrior. He honoured Mohammed as the prophet of God, but treated with little respect his successors and commentators. His prayers were believed to have singular effect in procuring rain. When the country suffered by drought, he was accustomed to appoint a fast, and, at the close of it, a public procession, at which all his subjects were required to assist, without their turbans, and in the meanest garb.

The account which Badhia, who travelled under the name of Ali Bey, gives of the rise of the Wahhabees, varies in several respects from the statement of Lord Valentia. He represents the reformer as having taken up the resolution in early life, while pursuing his theological studies at Medinah, to restore the Mohammedan worship to its pristine simplicity. 'Medinah and Mekka, being interested in maintaining the ancient rites and customs, were not the proper places to introduce the innovations proposed by the reformer. He therefore directed

his steps towards the East, with a view to insinuate himself among the tribes of Bedoween Arabs, who, being indifferent about the worship, and too little enlightened to support or defend its particular rites, were not, on the other hand, interested in the support of any one in particular. In reality, Abdoulwahheb made a proselyte of Ibn Saaoud, prince, or grand sheikh, of the Arabs, established at Draaiya (Daraieh), a town seventeen days' journey east of Medinah, in the desert. The period of the reformation of Abdoulwahheb may be reckoned from that date (1747). Abdoulwahheb never offered himself as a prophet, as has been supposed. He has only acted as a learned sheikh reformer, who was desirous of purifying the worship of all the additions which the imaums, the interpreters, and the doctors had made to it, and of reducing it to the primitive simplicity of the Koran. The reform of Abdoulwahheb, being admitted by Ibn Saaoud, was embraced by all the tribes subject to his command. This was a pretext for attacking the neighbouring tribes, who were successively reduced to the alternative of embracing the reform, or of perishing under the sword of the reformer.

‘At the death of Ibn Saaoud, his successor, Abdelaaziz (or Abduluziz) continued to use those energetic means which could not fail in their effect.\*

\* Abduluziz is represented by Lord Valentia to have been the son of Abd-ul-Wahheb, whom he is stated to have peaceably succeeded in his spiritual and temporal power. But, according to Niebuhr, the son of Abd-ul-Wahheb was named Mohammed, and he had already succeeded his father, in 1764. Niebuhr travelled about that time, and he says: ‘After the death of Abd-ul-Wahheb, his son retained the same authority, and continued to prosecute his views. He sustains the supreme ecclesiastical character in El Arud. The hereditary sheikhs of the small states in that country, which were once independent, do indeed still retain a nominal authority, but Mohammed is, in fact, sovereign of the whole. He exacts a

Upon the smallest resistance, he attacked with a decided superiority; and consequently, all the wealth and property of the vanquished passed immediately into the hands of the Wahhabites. If the enemy did not resist, but embraced the reform, and entered under the dominion of Abdelaaziz, the prince of the faithful, this still more increased the strength of his party.

‘Abdelaaziz, being already master of the interior part of Arabia, soon found himself in a state to extend his views over the adjacent country. He began, in 1801, by making an expedition to the neighbourhood of Bagdadt. At the head of a body of troops mounted on dromedaries, he advanced upon Imaum Hossein, a town at a short distance from Bagdadt, where stood the tomb of this Imaum, the grandson of the prophet, in a magnificent temple, filled with the riches of Turkey and Persia. The inhabitants made but a feeble resistance; and the conqueror put to the sword all the men and male children of every age. While they executed this horrible butchery, a Wahhabite doctor cried from the top of a tower, ‘Kill, strangle all the infidels who give companions to God.’ Abdelaaziz seized upon the treasures of the temple, which he destroyed and pillaged, and burned the city, converting it into a desert.\*

tribute, under the name of *sikka* (aid), for the purpose of carrying on the war against the infidels.’ Badhia has apparently mistaken this son of Abd-ul-Wahheb for his father, styling the latter, the Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdoulwahheb. Abduluziz was probably the son of Ibn Saaoud, though he is merely called by Badhia, his successor. But, from 1764 to 1801, there is a chasm. If Abduluziz was really descended from Abd-ul-Wahheb, he may have been his grandson, and the successor of Mohammed.

\* ‘No wars,’ justly remarks Mr Mills, ‘which ever desolated the Christian world, have caused half the bloodshed and wo, or been so strongly stamped with the character of implacable animosity, as have the political and religious contro-



‘Upon his return from this horrible expedition, Abdelaaziz fixed his eyes upon Mekka, persuaded that, could he seize upon this holy city, the centre of Islamism, he should acquire a new title to the sovereignty of the Mussulman countries that surround it. Fearing the vengeance of the Pasha of Bagdadt, on account of his expedition against Imaum Hosseïn, he was unwilling to absent himself from his territory; he, therefore, sent his son Saaoud with a strong army to take possession of Mekka.’\*

Thus far we have followed Ali Bey ; but the particulars of this expedition are given with more minuteness and apparent authenticity by Lord Valentia, who visited Arabia in 1803-4. Ghalib, the reigning shereef, was at this time deservedly unpopular. He was represented to the noble Traveller as a monster of iniquity, who had scrupled at no means of accumulating treasure, and who had poisoned two pashas and a young prince of the Maldives, who had come to Djidda in a vessel of his own, on his way to Mekka. So little confidence did Mozeifë, his brother-in-law, place in him, that, on being sent on a mission to Daraieh, he took the opportunity of deserting, and professed himself a Wahhabee. On this, Abduluziz intrusted him with the command of 12,000 men, with which he returned to invade the territories of his brother-in-law, and, in several battles, constantly defeated him. In February 1803, he laid siege to

versies of the Mohammedan sectaries. The history of every age of the Hejira teems with details of horror; and the Turks and Persians, the representatives of the two sets of opinions, have in most ages emulated each other in mutual detestation. In the rancour of their feuds, not only were the Christians and Jews held in comparative esteem, but the destruction of a single individual of the adverse party, has been accounted a more meritorious action than the slaughter of seventy individuals of any other description.’ — *Hist. of Muhammed*, p. 374.

\* Travels of Ali Bey, vol. ii, pp. 129 — 34.

Tayif, where Ghalib had his finest palace and most flourishing gardens. The shereef hastened to its relief, and defended the place for several days, till his nephew Abdullah secretly withdrew in the night to Mekka; when, conscious of the detestation in which he was held by his subjects, and dreading lest they should place Abdullah in his stead, Ghalib abandoned Tayif, after setting his palace on fire, and, with his wives and treasure, gained his capital. Mozeife immediately entered Tayif, and his followers commenced their usual work of devastation. Eight hundred males were put to the sword, but the harems were respected; many houses, however, were burned, and the whole place was plundered. All the saint's tombs were destroyed, and among them, that of Abdullah Ebn Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed, an edifice celebrated throughout Arabia for its pre-eminent beauty and sanctity. Mozeife, as a reward of his treachery, was appointed governor of Tayif; but, unwilling that any descendant of the prophet should be his viceroy in Mekka, Abduluziz sent his eldest son Sâoud to take the command of the victorious army, with which he marched against the holy city so rapidly, that Ghalib, taken by surprise and panic-struck, fled to Djidda, leaving his brother to make the best terms he could with the enemy. On the 27th of April, 1803, the Wahhabite general entered Mekka.\* In strict conformity to the terms of the capitulation, he neither plundered nor injured the inhabitants. Scandalized, however, at the sepulchral honours paid to the descendants of the prophet, he ordered eighty splendid tombs, the great ornament of the city, to be levelled with the ground; nor was

\* Lord Valentia speaks of this as the first time that Mekka had submitted to a hostile invader since Mohammed entered it in 629. But Abu Thaher had previously taken and pillaged the city in the year 930.

the monument of the venerable Kadijah exempted from the ruthless edict. The coffee-houses next fell under the desolating zeal of the reformers: the hookahs were piled in a heap, and burned, and the use of tobacco and coffee was prohibited under severe penalties. The holy places were plundered, but the Kaaba remained uninjured; and Sâoud, aware of the benefits which the city derived from the annual influx of pilgrims, transmitted the following letter to the Grand Seignior:

‘Sâoud to Selim. I entered Mekka on the 4th day of Moharem, in the 1,218th year of the Hejira. I kept peace towards the inhabitants. I destroyed all the tombs that were idolatrously worshipped. I abolished the levying of all customs above two and a half per cent. I confirmed the kadi whom you had appointed to govern in the place, agreeably to the commands of Mohammed. I desire that, in the ensuing years, you will give orders to the Pashas of Shâm (Damascus) and Misr (Cairo), not to come accompanied with the *mahamel*,\* trumpets, and drums into Mekka and Medinah. For why? Religion is not profited by these things. Peace be between us, and may the blessing of God be unto you! Dated on the 10th day of Moharem.’ (May 3.)

On the 11th of May, Sâoud marched against Djidda; but the delay had given time to the shereef to prepare for his reception. An attempt made to storm the town failed, but Sâoud contrived to cut off the supply of water, and during the nine days that the blockade was continued, numbers perished with thirst. At length, the shereef was induced to offer a sum of money to Sâoud as the condition of his abandoning the siege; and the sum of a lac and 30,000 dollars

\* For a description of the *mahamel*, or *mahmal*, and the procession alluded to, see MOD. TRAV., *Syria*, vol. ii, pp. 47—9.

had been agreed on, when intelligence was brought to Sâoud of the death of his father, which compelled him precipitately to return to Daraieh, lest any rival should dispute the succession. Abduluziz, while at prayers in one of the mosques of his capital, was, like Ali, assassinated by an Arab, whose daughter he had forcibly carried away many years before ; on which the Arab had sold all his property, and perseveringly tracked the footsteps of his oppressor, till he found the opportunity of satiating his long-cherished revenge.

By the retreat of Sâoud, Djidda was for the time saved, and Mekka again fell under the dominion of its shereef ; but Tayif remained in the hands of Mozeife. In 1804, Medinah, with the accumulated treasure of ages, became a prey to the Wahhabees, and the tomb of the prophet shared the fate of those of his descendants. Djidda was again attacked, but without success : the shereef had received succours from Egypt. Yambo fell, but was retaken by a naval force. The Pasha of Syria forced his way that year through the undisciplined troops of the Wahhabees, and the usual ceremonies were performed by the faithful at the Kaaba. But since then, several years have passed without its being practicable for the pilgrims to visit the holy city, owing to the flying squadrons of the enemy. The great caravan from Damascus in 1805, could not obtain a passage, but by heavy sacrifices ; and Sâoud signified to the Emir Hajji, or prince of the pilgrims, (as the Pasha of Damascus is styled,) that the caravan should no longer come under the protection of the Turks, or bring the rich carpet that the Grand Seignior sends every year to cover the sepulchre of the prophet ; a thing looked upon as a great sin by the Wahhabees. In short, he required that the whole caravan should be composed absolutely of pilgrims alone, without

troops, arms, flag, or any other trophies or ornaments, and without music or women. Notwithstanding this declaration of Sâoud, the caravan of Damascus wished to make the pilgrimage the following year (1806), without strictly conforming to the ordinances of the conqueror; but it had hardly arrived at the gates of Medinah, when it was obliged to retire in disorder, persecuted and annoyed by the Wahhabees, who occupied the city and the neighbourhood.

The political situation of the country in January 1807, the time at which Badhia visited Mekka, was highly critical. The sultan-shereef had remained the natural and immediate sovereign of the Hedjaz, and the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Grand Seignior was still publicly recognised in the sermon on Fridays, in spite of Sâoud's prohibition to introduce his name into the service. The shereef still preserved, also, some influence in the Arabian ports, as well as at Kosseir, and even on the coasts of Abyssinia, in the name of the Grand Seignior. The Porte continued to send a pasha to Djidda, who passed his time at Mekka in eating at the expense of the shereef, without performing any act of authority, so that his existence was almost unknown. Djidda, Mekka, and Medinah received, also, each its kadi from Constantinople, but their functions were purely judicial. The Sultan Sâoud had not yet made himself master of the government; he exacted no contributions, and appeared even to respect the authority of the shereef, although the latter felt himself compelled to conform to the orders and regulations issued by the Wahhabite sovereign. There was not a consul or agent of any foreign nation in the country. Such was the state of things, when, on the 26th of February 1807, the Sultan Sâoud issued orders, which were proclaimed in all public places, that all pilgrims and soldiers, Turkish as well as Moggrebin, belonging to



the shereef, should quit Mekka on the afternoon of the following day, preparatory to their being sent out of Arabia. This order extended to the Turkish pasha, and both the old and new kadies of Mekka, Medinah, and the other places, so that not a single Turk was to remain in the country. The shereef was disarmed, his authority annihilated, and the judicial power passed into the hands of the Wahhabees. All the Turkish soldiers retired to Djidda during the night. Of the negro soldiers, 250 went over to the service of Sâoud, and the rest left on the 28th. It was given out, that the sultan would himself accompany the rear-guard of the troop of pilgrims as far as the frontiers of Syria, and then return to establish his residence at Mekka, or at least give the government of the sacred territory to one of his sons. Accordingly, having installed his kadies, and left a large sum to be distributed as alms among the servants of the temple and the poor of the city, he directed his course with his troops to Medinah ; and thus this political revolution terminated, without a drop of blood being shed.

Since then (A.D. 1815), Mekka has again changed its master, having been conquered by Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt. In whose hands it is at present, we know not. The possession of this isolated and defenceless town, with its barren territory, is of no further consequence, than as it gives the shadow of a title to the ecclesiastical supremacy, and as a revenue is derived from the contributions levied on the pilgrims who repair to the Kaaba. So much, however, have the security and the *éclat* of these pious expeditions been diminished, that the trading part is likely to be diverted into other channels, and, in that case, the pilgrimage would lose at least half its attractions. It is a pity that the Wahhabees have not long ago carried off the black stone, filled up the well Zemzem, and overturned the Kaaba. But Islamism has re-

ceived its death-blow from the sword of Sâoud, and Arabia is for ever lost to the pretended successor of the prophet. The most powerful person in the country, next to the Sultan of Daraiyeh, at the period of Ali Bey's visit, was Abou Nokhta, 'grand Sheikh of Yemen.' The Imaum of Mascat was dependant on Sâoud; the Bahrein Islands, with the pearl fishery, were also under his dominion; and he was extending his power on the great desert between Damascus, Bagdadt, and Bassora. Mokha, Sanaa, and other walled towns in Yemen, were still exempted from his authority; but the little state of Aden alone appeared to possess, in the wisdom of its sovereign and the bravery of his troops, the means of resisting the Wahhabite despotism.

'The Wahhabees,' says Ali Bey, 'have no military organisation. All their tactics consist in forming themselves into squadrons, under the direction of a chief, and in following his movements, without order, and without forming ranks; but their discipline is truly Spartan, and their obedience extreme. Their civil organisation is in no better state than their military: they have no person in office, nor any superior or inferior courts. Each sheikh is responsible for the payment of the tenth,' (the tribute imposed by the Koran, which Sâoud continued to exact,) 'and for furnishing the contingent of troops in time of war. Sâoud sends kadies to the towns subject to his dominion, but he has no pashas, vizirs, or other ministers. The reformer, Abdoul Wehhab, did not invest himself with any honour or public character: he was only the chief of the sect, and did not require any personal distinction. After his death, his son, who succeeded him, preserved the same simplicity.'

Such a power as this contains within itself the seeds of dissolution. The physical character of the country could alone render the Wahhabees powerful. Well

does their character correspond to the language of prophecy, that Ishmael shall be 'a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand will be against him, and he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren.'\* Enemies alike to commerce, to agriculture, and the arts,† consuming less than they destroy, and producing less than they consume, religiously opposed to the luxuries and refinements of civilized society, these austere and fierce barbarians present the phenomenon of the people in the primitive stage of civilisation, dwelling in the presence of all their brethren, unsubdued and unchangeable, — children of the desert, hostile towards all the rest of the human race, — yet, in their acknowledgment of the true God, and their singular zeal against every approach to idolatry, seeming still to bear the mark of their ancestry as the children of Abraham.

But we must now proceed to take a nearer view of the topography, population, and scenery of this singular country; and we shall first conduct the reader across the desert, from Suez to the consecrated precincts of Sinai.

#### PENINSULA OF MOUNT SINAI.

The Travellers with whom we are now about to explore the wilderness of Sinai, are Niebuhr (1762), Mr Fazakerley (1811), Burckhardt (1816), and Sir Frederick Henniker (1820). The *hajji* route from

\* Gen. xvi, 12.

† The sale of chaplets made of odoriferous sandal-wood, formed a very lucrative branch of commerce at Mekka. The Wahhabite sovereign prohibited the manufacture, condemning the use of them as superstitious. Coffee, the principal article of cultivation in Yemen, and tobacco, are both prohibited articles. Their religious antipathy to monumental architecture has been but too savagely demonstrated at Mekka and at Imaum Hossein.

Cairo is altogether overland, but Christians were forbidden, when Niebuhr travelled, to take this sacred route, and embarked at Suez for Djidda. The desert from Cairo to Suez is crossed by three different routes ; — the great hajji route ; a route pursued by the Syrian Bedoweens, close along the mountains ; and the route called *derb al ankaby*, taken by the Bedoweens of Tor, which lies midway between the hajji route and the most southerly one. The middle track was taken by Burckhardt, and he supposes, that before Nechos dug the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, the communication between Arsinoe and Memphis may have been carried on this way, as several spots occur, which are now covered with petrified trees, and have probably been stations. The desert of Suez is never inhabited by Bedoween encampments, though it is full of rich pasture and pools of water during the winter and spring. The reason assigned is, that no strong tribes frequent the eastern borders of Egypt, and a weak, insulated encampment would soon be stripped of its property by nightly robbers. The ground is the patrimony of no tribe, but, contrary to the general custom of the desert, is common to all.

Suez, in the time of Niebuhr, was not enclosed. There is now a wall on the west and south-west, which is rapidly falling to decay: the eastern part is completely in ruins, but near the shore are some well-built khans, and in the inhabited part of the town are several good private houses. The harbour is spacious and safe. Its aspect is that of an Arabian, not an Egyptian town. Even in the barren waste that surrounds it, it resembles Yambo and Djidda; and the greater part of the shopkeepers are Syrians or Arabs. Neither merchants nor artisans live in it. Its population, Burckhardt says, consists only of about a dozen agents, who receive goods from the ports of the Red Sea, and forward them to their cor-

respondents at Cairo; together with some shopkeepers who deal in provisions. 'As Suez is one of the few harbours in the Red Sea where ships can be repaired, some vessels are constantly to be seen at the wharf, where the repairs are carried on by *Greek* shipwrights in the service of the pasha; but it has of late become a harbour of secondary importance, the supplies of provisions, &c, for the hedjaz being collected chiefly at Kosseir, whence they are shipped for Yambo and Djidda: the trade in coffee and India goods still passes this way to Cairo.'\* The air of the town is bad, owing to the extensive salt marshes on the north and north-east, which are filled with stagnant waters by the tides. The inhabitants endeavour to counteract the influence of the malaria by drinking brandy; but the mortality is not diminished by such a remedy, and fevers of a malignant kind prevail during the spring and summer. At Suez, there is not a single spring. The water of the wells of Naba, two leagues distant, though called sweet, has a very indifferent taste, and becomes putrid after being kept in skins for a few days. 'Nothing,' says Mr Fazakerley, 'can look more desolate and deplorable than Suez: a few houses built of mud and wood, and bounded by the desert and the sea; not a blade of grass or the leaf of a tree in sight. Crowds of vultures were feeding on the carcasses of mules, horses, and camels, as we approached the town.' All the provisions are brought from Cairo, except dried fruits from Ghaza, and a few dates and other fruits in autumn, together with charcoal from Mount Sinai.†

\* In 1817, a small fleet of English ships arrived at Suez direct from Bombay, being an attempt on the part of the pasha to open a direct trade between India and Egypt.

† Yet, Sir F. Henniker styles the situation of Suez 'beautiful,' and the place 'tolerable even as a Turkish town:' were it in other hands, he says, it would be delightful. 'The Red Sea appears here as a lake girded with rock!' Thus do travellers differ!



It is a passage of twenty-four hours across the Red Sea to Tor, — a journey by land of three days. The precise spot at which the Israelites crossed, it is, perhaps, impossible precisely to determine. The natives point out indifferently the valley of Bedeah, the passage from Suez across the narrow arm of the sea which runs up to the port, and other points of the coast further southward, opposite *Ayoun Mousa* and the *Hammam Faraoun*. The learned Traveller, Dr Shaw, objects against the opinion which fixes the passage opposite *Ayoun Mousa*, that there is not sufficient depth of water there to drown so many Egyptians, — an objection which would seem to apply with still greater force to the opinion of Niebuhr, who fixes upon Suez as the point at which they crossed. But the fact is, that the waters have retired, and the coral shoals have increased so much in every part of the gulf, that no decisive argument can be built on the present shallowness of the water.\* The Gulf

\* 'The arm of the sea which runs up before Suez, appears at first sight to be only of the breadth of a river, in comparison with the open sea, and too small, therefore, to have been chosen by the Almighty as the scene of the manifestation of his power. I therefore thought at first, that the children of Israel must have passed the Red Sea some leagues southward of Suez. But, on measuring the breadth of the gulf near the town, I found it 1,514 paces (3,500 feet,) and further north, it is still wider. This led me to change my opinion. If the children of Israel passed the sea at Kolsoum, the miracle would, indeed, be less than if they crossed it near Bedeah. But it is a mistake to suppose that the multitude could cross here without a prodigy; for even in the present day, no caravan crosses here to go from Cairo to Mount Sinai, notwithstanding that it would materially shorten the distance. It must naturally have been more difficult to the Israelites thousands of years ago, when the gulf was probably broader and deeper, and extended further northward. It has been objected, however, that, if the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea near Suez, Pharoah might easily have doubled the point and overtaken them; but we cannot ascertain how far northward the gulf might then extend. Pharoah does not appear to me to have been senseless in wishing

of Suez, Niebuhr says, undoubtedly extended further north ages ago than it does at present. In former times, ships entered the harbour of Kolsoum, which stood higher up than Suez, but, in consequence of the retreat of the waters, that harbour was deserted, and Suez, which was not in existence towards the end of the fifteenth century, rose on its ruins. Niebuhr crossed the creek at low water on his camel, near the supposed ruins of Kolsoum, and the Arabs, who attended him on foot, were only up to their knees; but no caravan, he says, could pass here without great inconvenience, and certainly not dry-foot.\* Nor could the Israelites, he remarks, have availed themselves of any coral rocks, as they are so sharp that they would have cut their feet. Moreover, if we suppose that the agency of the tides was employed by Divine Providence in favouring the passage of the Israelites, the east wind which, blowing all night, divided the waters of the gulf in the middle, preserving a body of water above and below, and laying bare the channel between the walls,—was clearly supernatural. The wind here constantly blows six

to cross the sea at Suez, where, perhaps, the channel was only half a league in breadth, after he had seen the Israelites go over; but he would have been wanting in prudence, if, after having seen so many prodigies in Egypt, he had entered a sea three leagues and more in extent; and all the Egyptians must have been out of their minds, to have been willing to pursue the Israelites through such a sea.' — NIEBUHR, *Description de l'Arabie*, pp. 353, 4. See also his *Voyage en Arabie*, tom. i, p. 204; and *Calmet's Dict.* by TAYLOR, Frag. xxxix, vol. iii, p. 66.

\* When Burckhardt left Suez, the tide was at flood, and he was obliged to make the tour of the whole creek, which, he says, 'at low water can be forded;' but, 'in winter time, and immediately after the rainy season, the circuit is rendered still greater, because the low grounds to the northward of the creek are then inundated, and become so swampy that the camels cannot pass them.' He rode for *an hour and three quarters* in a straight line northwards, before he turned to the east.

months north and six months south.\* And as this unprecedented ebb of the waters must have been preternatural, not less so was the sudden tempestuous reflux by which the Egyptians were overwhelmed. Perhaps a thick fog, it is suggested, might hasten their destruction. The depth at high water now does not exceed from eight to ten feet, but the same causes which have enlarged the land on the eastern shore, have rendered the gulf shallower. The winds, blowing the sands of Arabia into the Red Sea, are constantly forming shallows among the rocks, and threaten in time to fill up the gulf.

Dr Shaw, however, displays his usual learning and ingenuity in fixing the passage of the Israelites opposite the desert of Shur. Supposing Rameses to have been Cairo, there are two roads, he remarks, by which the Israelites might have been conducted to Pihabhiroth on the coast; the one through the valleys of Jendily, Rumeleah, and Baideah, which are bounded on each side by the mountains of the Lower Thebais; the other, more to the northward, having these mountains for several leagues on the right, and the desert on the left, till it turns through a remarkable breach or ravine in the northernmost range, into the valley of Baideah. The latter he presumes to have been the road taken by the Israelites. Succoth, the first station, signifies only a place of tents; and Etham, the second station, he considers as probably on the edge of the mountainous district of the

\* 'The north-east monsoon prevails from the 15th of October to the 15th of April, rendering the entrance of the Red Sea easy, which is impracticable during the opposite monsoon. These periodical winds have great influence on the height of the tides, so that the extremity of that arm which divides Suez from Arabia, may sometimes be passed on foot.' — MALTE BRUN, vol. ii, p. 191. The exodus took place on the 15th of the month Nisan (the beginning of April), during the prevalence, therefore, of the northern monsoon.

Lower Thebais. Here the Israelites were ordered to turn (from their line of march), and encamp before Pihahhiroth, *i. e.* the mouth of the gullet or defile, betwixt Migdol and the sea.\* This valley, he supposes to be identified with that of Baideah, which signifies miraculous, and it is also still called *Tiah Beni Israel*, the road of the Israelites. *Baal-tzephon*, over against which they encamped, is supposed to be the mountain still called *Jebel Attakkah*, the mountain of deliverance. Over against *Jebel Attakhah*, at ten miles' distance, is the desert of Sdur, or Shur, where the Israelites landed.† This part of the gulf would, therefore, be capacious enough to cover a numerous army,‡ and yet, might be traversed by the Israelites in a night; whereas, from Corondel to Tor, the channel is ten or twelve leagues broad, which is too great a distance to have been travelled by a multitude with such incumbrances, and the passage from Suez appears as much too short. Having once entered this valley, it might well be said, that the wilderness had 'shut them in,' inasmuch as the mountains of Mokattem would deny them a passage to the southward; those in the neighbourhood of Suez would be a barrier to the northward, towards the land of the Philistines; the Red Sea was before them to the east, while Pharoah with his army closed up the defile behind them. The valley ends in a small bay formed by the eastern extremities of the mountains.§

The Arabian Gulf is supposed to derive its Hebrew name, *Yam Sâf*, from the *algæ* and *fuci* with which

\* Exod. xiv, i.

† Exod. xv, 22.

‡ The Israelites amounted to 600,000 men, besides children and a mixed multitude; and the army of Pharoah, which included 600 chosen chariots, could not have been less numerous.

§ Shaw's Travels, folio, pp. 344 — 6, and Supplem. p. 98.

the sea abounds, by which the ancients accounted for its remarkably green colour, *sûf* being rendered weed, reed, or any submarine plant. Dr Shaw, however, says, he nowhere observed any species of the flag kind; M. Forskal denies that any reeds grow on the shore; and Mr Bruce says, that he never saw a weed of any sort in it. The opinion of the latter writer is; that 'it is from the large trees, or plants, of *white coral*, spread every where over the bottom of the Red Sea, that the sea has obtained this name,' which he proposes to translate, the Sea of Coral. Against this it is objected, that the proper word for coral is *ramulh*;<sup>\*</sup> but the meaning of that term has been disputed. The name by which the gulf is invariably designated in the Old Testament, is still preserved in the Arabic appellation, *Bahr Souf*. It is also called *Bahr el Kolsoum*, the Sea of Kolsoum (the Greek Clysma), which signifies drowning, or overwhelming, and seems to allude to the destruction of the Egyptians. By the Septuagint, the original word is rendered θαλασσα Σιφ, the Sea of Ziph,† *Ερυθρα θαλασσα*, the Erythrean Sea,‡ and *εσχατην θαλασσαν*, the furthest sea.§ The latter, it has been contended by some, is the true meaning of the Hebrew, *suph* sometimes signifying limit, boundary, or extremity; and this sea is repeatedly mentioned in Scripture as the boundary of the possessions of Israel.|| At what time it received the name of the Sea of Edom, is uncertain; but this is believed to be the name which the Greeks, mistaking a proper name for an appellative, rendered the Erythrean, or Red Sea. Pliny and Pomponius

\* Job xxviii, 18. Ezek, xxvii, 16.

† Judges xi, 16.

‡ Exod. xiii, 18, *et passim*.

§ 1 Kings ix, 26.

|| Exod. xxiii, 31. Num. xxxiv, 3. Psalm lxxii, 8. See Harris's Nat. Hist. of the Bible, Art. *Flag*. But query, whether this be not only a secondary meaning of the word *suf*, (*i. e.* post, or stake,) and not likely to be applied to a sea?



Mela state, that it obtained this name from a King Erythros who reigned in Arabia, and whose tomb was to be seen in the island Tyrine, or Agyris. This king is plausibly supposed to be no other than Edom, or Esau; and the Sea of Sûf (or Zuf) is expressly said to have been in the land of Edom.\* Its western branch is, by the Greek and Latin geographers, styled the Gulf of Heroopolis and the Sea of Clysma,† from the towns on its western shore. The Erythrean Sea is the name applied by the Greeks to all the seas round the Arabian peninsula; but the Red Sea is now understood as exclusively denoting the Arabian Gulf. We shall have further occasion to advert to the dangers of the navigation; but, while we are adverting to its many names, it may be as well to mention, that in calm weather, according to Forskal, the bottom of the gulf, ‘covered with a carpet of greenish coral,’ presents a resemblance to ‘a series of verdant submarine forests and meadows, affording an agreeable contrast to the gloomy uniformity of arid and sandy country by which it is encircled.’ Well may it be called, then, the Coral Sea.

We shall now proceed to avail ourselves of Burckhardt’s journal of his tour in the peninsula of Sinai. He left Suez early on the 25th of April, 1816, attended by his guide and another Arab. After passing several mounds of rubbish, which afford no object of curiosity except ‘a few large stones, supposed to be the ruins of Clysma, or of Arsinoe‡, he rode northward for an hour and three quarters, and then turned

\* 1 Kings ix, 26; 2 Chron. viii, 17.

† Clysma, or Kolsoum, is placed by Niebuhr at Suez; but Shaw supposes Suez to be the ancient Arsinoe.

‡ Probably the remains of ‘the castle which the Turks built upon’ (or from) ‘the ruins of the ancient Kolsoum,’ — referred to by Niebuhr, who says, that of Kolsoum considerable ruins still remain to the north of Suez.

to the east, 'just at the point where the remains of the ancient canal are very distinctly visible.' Two swellings of the ground, about eight or ten feet high, run in parallel directions, at the distance of about twenty-five feet: they begin at a few hundred paces to the N.W. of high-water mark, whence the ground northward is covered with a saline crust. Having turned the point of the inlet, our Traveller halted for a short time at the wells of *Ayoun Mousa*, under the date trees, and then, proceeding two hours and three quarters further, rested in the plain called *El Kordhye*. 'The water of the wells of *Ayoun Mousa* (the springs of Moses) is copious, but one only affords sweet water, and this is so often rendered muddy by the passage of Arabs, whose camels descend into the wells, that it is seldom fit to supply a provision to the traveller, much less for shipping.\*

The next day, proceeding in a direction S. by E. and then S.S.E., over a barren, sandy, and gravelly plain, called *El Ahtha*, he halted, at the end of four hours and a half, in a dry and shallow wady, called *Wady Seder*, and, in three hours further, reached *Wady Wardan*, at the extremity of which is the well of *Abou Szoueyra*, half an hour from the sea-shore, containing good water. Low mountains, the commencement of the chain of Tyh, inhabited by the Terabein Arabs, run parallel with the road, at the distance of about eight miles to the left. Near *Abou Szoueyra*, a chain of sand-hills begins to the west, near the sea, and the eastern mountains approaching the road, form, about two hours further, a junction with these hills. At ten hours, the road enters the hilly country, consisting of chalk and silex in very irregular strata; and at the end of ten hours and

\* 'These pretended fountains are five holes in the sand, in a well of very indifferent water, that becomes turbid whenever any of it is drawn.' — NIEBUHR.

three quarters, Burckhardt rested for the night in a barren valley called *Wady Amara*.

At an hour and three quarters from his resting-place, he passed, the next day, the well of *Howara*, round which grow a few date-trees, but the water of which is so bitter, that men cannot drink it; and even camels, if not very thirsty, refuse to taste it. 'From Ayoun Mousa to the well of Howara,' continues Burckhardt, 'we had travelled fifteen hours and a quarter. Referring to this distance, it appears probable that this is the desert of three days, mentioned in the Scriptures to have been crossed by the Israelites immediately after their passing the Red Sea, and at the end of which they arrived at Marah. In moving with a whole nation, the march may well be supposed to have occupied three days; and the bitter well at Marah, which was sweetened by Moses, corresponds exactly to that of Howara. This is the usual route to Mount Sinai, and was probably, therefore, that which the Israelites took on their escape from Egypt, *provided it be admitted, that they crossed the sea near Suez*, as Niebuhr with good reason conjectures. There is no other road of three days' march in the way from Suez towards Sinai; nor is there any other well absolutely bitter on the whole of this coast, as far as Ras Mohammed. The complaints of the bitterness of the water by the children of Israel, who had been accustomed to the sweet water of the Nile, are such as may daily be heard from the Egyptian servants and peasants who travel in Arabia. Accustomed from their youth to the excellent water of the Nile, there is nothing which they so much regret in countries distant from Egypt. With respect to the means employed by Moses to render the waters of the well sweet, I have frequently inquired among the Bedouins in different parts of Arabia, whether they possessed any means of effecting such a change by

throwing wood into it, or by any other process; but I never could learn that such an art was known.

‘At the end of three hours we reached *Wady Gharendel*, which extends to the N.E., and is almost a mile in breadth, and full of trees. The Arabs told me, that it may be traced through the whole desert, and that it begins at no great distance from El Arish on the Mediterranean; but I had no means of ascertaining the truth of the statement. About half an hour from the place where we halted, in a southern direction, is a copious spring with a small rivulet, which renders the valley the principal station on this route. The water is disagreeable, and, if kept for a night in the water-skins, it *turns bitter*, and spoils, as I have myself experienced, having passed this way three times. If we admit *Bir Howara* to be the *Marah* of Exodus (xv. 23), then *Wady Gharendel* is probably *Elim*, with its wells and date trees; an opinion entertained by Niebuhr, who, however, did not see the bitter well of *Howara*. (It lies among hills, about 200 paces out of the road.) The non-existence at present of twelve wells at *Gharendel*, must not be considered as evidence against this conjecture; for Niebuhr says, that his companions obtained water here by digging to a very small depth, and there was a great plenty of it when I passed. Water, in fact, is readily found by digging, in every fertile valley in Arabia, and wells are thus easily formed, which are quickly filled up again by the sands. The *Wady Gharendel* contains date-trees, tamarisks, acacias of different species, and the thorny shrub *gharkad*, (the *peganum retusum* of Forskal,) which is extremely common in this peninsula, and is also met with in the sands of the Delta on the coast of the Mediterranean. Its small red berry, of the size of a grain of the pomegranate, is very juicy and refreshing, much resembling a ripe gooseberry in taste, but not so sweet. The Arabs are very fond of it, and make a

conserve of the berries. The *gharkad*, which, from the colour of its fruit, is also called *homra*, delights in a sandy soil, and reaches its maturity in the height of summer, when the ground is parched up, exciting an agreeable surprise in the traveller at finding so juicy a berry produced in the driest soil and season.\* The bottom of the valley swarms with ticks, which are extremely distressing both to men and beasts, and on this account the caravans usually encamp on the sides of the hills.'

Dr Shaw, however, who differs from Niebuhr in fixing the passage of the Israelites at Baideah, and in landing them opposite the *Jebel Attakkah* in the desert of Shur, fixes Marah at *Corondel*; the same place that Niebuhr writes *Girondel*, and Burckhardt *Gharrendel*. Here, he says, 'is a small rill of water, which, unless it be diluted with the dews and rains, still continues to be brackish.' Burckhardt bears testimony to the disagreeableness and impurity of the water. Near this place, the sea forms a large bay called *Berk el Corondel*, into which a strong current sets in from the northward. The desert in this neighbourhood, according to Dr Shaw, is still called Marah, (*Morra*, in Arabic, means bitter)—a cir-

\* Burckhardt suggests, that possibly the berry of this shrub may be what Moses used to sweeten the waters of Marah, and that it may have the same effect as the juice of pomegranates. He did not observe any of this shrub, however, near Howara; nor did he submit the water to any experiment. The wood which God showed Moses, is called *alvah*. A modern Traveller in South America, speaks of a shrub called *alumbre*, a branch of which, put into the muddy stream of the Magdalena, precipitated the mud and earth, leaving the water sweet and clear. — See MOD. TRAV., *Colombia*, p. 289. The first discoverers of the Floridas are said to have corrected the stagnant and fetid water they found there, by infusing in it branches of sassafras; and it is understood, that the first use of tea among the Chinese, was, to correct the waters of their ponds and rivers.



cumstance which requires only to be verified, to determine the disputed locality. In placing Marah at Corondel, he 'contends that he is justified by its distance from Sedur or Shur, which answers to three such days' journeys as he supposes the Israelites would make. We have seen that Burekhardt makes it only sixteen hours and a half from Ayoun Mousa, and about ten hours from *Wady Seder* (Shur), which is little more than one ordinary day's journey (eight hours). According to the oriental mode of calculation, however, we have no reason to suppose that the Israelites travelled three whole days from Shur before they found water, (which is not at all probable) but that they did not find water till the third day, which, according to European reckoning, would be some time on the second;\* and five hours (from fifteen to eighteen miles) is perhaps as great a distance as, with women and children, they can be supposed to have travelled in a day. To remove Elim as far north as Corondel, is, Dr Shaw contends, unreasonable: 'for no station,' he says, 'could have been better or more circumstantially marked out than this, or has preserved greater tokens of the circumstances of its ancient situation. We are told that, at Elim, there were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees, and that they encamped or pitched there by the waters. Now at Corondel, we do not find (as far as I saw or could learn) the traces of any wells at all; neither is there any grove or collection of palm-trees. Whereas, in the neighbourhood of Tor, there is a regular and delightful plantation of palm-trees, equal to any in the date country of the Tuniseens. For the threescore and ten have, in process of time, improved themselves into more than two thousand.

\* Thus, our Lord is reckoned to have lain three days and three nights, (part of three twenty-four hours) in the grave. Compare also Esther iv, 16, with v, 1.

The wells, which are ranged along a narrow vale near the grove, are, indeed, a little diminished in number; yet, even those *nine* of them that remain to this day, (as so many are nowhere found together in any other part of Arabia,) are sufficient to attest for the possibility of there having been once a greater number. . . Under the shade of these trees is the *Hamman Mousa* (bath of Moses), which the inhabitants of Tor have in extraordinary esteem and veneration; acquainting us, that it was here that Moses himself and his peculiar household were encamped.\* The spot alluded to is two leagues from Tor, and nearly thirty from Corondel, on the northern skirts of the desert of Sin. As the Israelites did not leave Elim and enter this desert till the fifteenth day of the second month (*i. e.* about a month after the passover), its distance better agrees with the narrative of their journeyings, than that of Wady Gharendel, which is only an hour and a quarter from Howara.

From Wady Gharendel, Burckhardt proceeded in a S.S.E. direction over an open hilly country, and in an hour and a half reached *Wady Oszaitu* (Niebuhr writes it *Usaitu*), enclosed by chalk hills, where there is another bitter well, which is sometimes dry: a few date-trees stand near it.† Two hours and a quarter

\* Shaw, p. 350, and Sup. p. 104.

† From Gironde, Niebuhr proceeded half a mile to the S.W., 'through some little woods, over hills and through valleys;' then, turning southward, crossed a plain near the sea, and arrived, at the end of three quarters of a mile, at *Hamman Faraoun*. 'This bath,' he says, 'has two openings in the rock, close to each other, and is about ten feet above the level of the sea. A hot and powerful sulphurous vapour rises from it, and the water, which issues in several places from the bottom of the rock, is so hot that you can hardly hold your finger in it. They pretend that there are often sick persons in this bath, who, by the help of cords, descend into the above-mentioned openings, and bathe themselves for forty days in the hot water, during which they subsist almost entirely on a

further, S. E. by S.; is *Wady Thale*, where are found date-trees, acacias, and tamarisks. Rock salt abounds here as well as in Gharendel. Proceeding southward, he turned the point of the mountain, part of the chain extending towards Gharendel, and passed the rude tomb of a female saint called *Arys Themman* (the bridegroom of Themman), where the Arabs are in the habit of saying a short prayer, and suspending some rags of clothing upon some poles planted round the tomb. After having doubled the mountain, he entered the valley of *Wady Taybe*, which descends rapidly to the sea, and in three quarters of an hour turned into a branch of it, running E.S.E. between steep calcareous cliffs, called *Wady Shebeyke*, where he halted for the night, after a day's journey of nine hours and a quarter.

The fourth day, he proceeded at first E. by S. to a high plain, surrounded with rocks, and having a towering mountain called *Sarbout el Djemel* on the N. side. In two hours and a half, he turned the point of this mountain, and entered *Wady Hommar*, running E. by N. At the end of four hours, he issued from

fruit called *lassaf*, which abounds in this country. I know not what are the effects of this cure; but I saw in the neighbourhood a pretty large cemetery. If you will believe the Arabs, the king Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea, is now in the abyss which sends up the hot water and sulphurous vapour of the bath; and not only the bath, but a part also of the Arabian Gulf, which is still called *Birket Faraoun*, and which at certain seasons is very tempestuous, is named after that monarch. The eastern shore of the gulf, from Suez to *Djebel Hamman Faraoun*, is flat, with the exception of the little hills which are seen here and there; but the western coast is full of high mountains, which are separated by only two great valleys; the one opposite the plain of El Ty, the other opposite to Girondel.' Vol. i, p. 184. On leaving the place, this Traveller entered a winding valley, which led him now northward, now eastward, then to the south and west, till he reached Wady Usaitu.

this valley, where the southern rocks terminate, and proceeded over one of those sandy plains called *El Debbe*, till, in two hours and a half further, he entered a mountainous country much devastated by torrents. Here sandstone rocks begin. Following the windings of a valley, he reached, in seven hours and a quarter, *Wady el Naszeb*, where he rested ‘under the shade of a large impending rock, which for ages, probably, has afforded shelter to travellers.’ He supposes it to be the same that Niebuhr speaks of, who calls this valley the plain of *Warsan*.<sup>\*</sup> This may, he says, be its true name, but the Arabs comprise all the contiguous valleys under the general name of *Naszeb*. ‘Shady spots like this are well known to the Arabs; and, as the scanty foliage of the acacia, the only tree in which these valleys abound, affords no shade, they take advantage of such rocks, and regulate the day’s journey in such a way as to be able to reach them at noon, there to take the siesta.†’ The main branch of the *Wady Naszeb* continues further up to the S. E., and contains, at about half an hour from the place where we rested, a well of excellent water. The *Wady* empties its waters in the rainy season into the Gulf of Suez, at a short distance from the *Birket Faraoun*... The rocks round the resting-place are much shattered and broken, evidently by torrents; yet, no torrents

\* The fourth day from Ayoun Mousa, Niebuhr rested in the plain of *Warsan*, ‘under a little rock in which a great number of Greeks, who had gone on pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, had carved their names.’ Whether this is the rock to which Burckhardt alludes, seems doubtful. On walking round the rock, the latter was surprised to find inscriptions similar in form to those found in *Wady Mokatteb*, on the surface of blocks which have fallen down from the cliff. They have evidently been done in haste, and are very rudely scratched on the sandstone rock. A few rude drawings of camels and goats are likewise seen.

\* See *Psal. lxi*, 2.

within the memory of man have ever rushed down the valley. Some *syale*-trees, a species of mimosa, grow here, the pods of which, together with the tenderest shoots of the branches, serve as fodder to the camels, and the bark is used by the Arabs to tan leather.' From this spot, our traveller proceeded E. by S., and, at the end of two hours and a half, reached the summit of a steep mountain covered with moving sands, and rested on a high plain called *Raml el Morak*. Here he obtained an extensive view, bounded on the north by the chain of El Tyh, which begins near Sarbout el Djemel, and extends in a curve twenty or twenty-five miles eastward from the termination of Wady Hommar. At the eastern extremity is a high mountain, called *Djebel Odjme*, to the north of which begins the ridge called *El Dhelel*, a branch or continuation of El Tyh, running eastward towards the Gulf of Akaba. 'These chains form the northern boundaries of the Sinai mountains, and are the pasturing-places of the Sinai Bedouins. They are the most regular ranges of the peninsula, being almost throughout of equal height, without any prominent peaks, and extending in an uninterrupted line eastwards. They are inhabited by the tribes Terabein and Tyaha, the latter of whom are richer in camels and flocks than any other of the Towara tribes. The valleys of these mountains are said to afford excellent pasturage and fine springs, though not in great numbers. The Terabein frequently visit Cairo and Suez; but the Tyaha have more intercourse with Ghaza and Khaly (Hebron), and are a very bold independent people, often at war with their neighbours, and, even now, caring little for the authority of the Pasha of Egypt. At the southern foot of the mountain El Tyh, extends a broad sandy plain, called *El Seyh*, which begins at the *Debbe*, and continues for two days' journey eastwards. It affords good pasturage in spring, but has no water, and is therefore little frequented by the Bedoweens.' These



details, if not very important or interesting, will serve far better than vague general descriptions, to convey an idea of the nature of the country.

The next day, crossing the plain of Raml Morak, Burckhardt reached, in an hour and a quarter, the upper chain of the mountains of Sinai, where the grünstein rocks begin, mixed in places with layers of granite ; and entered the valley of *Wady Khamyle*. Here, on a projecting rock, he observed rude inscriptions and drawings similar to those of Wady Naszeb. At the end of three hours, he passed a burial-ground of the Szowaleha Bedoweens ; the place is called Mokbera. It seems, he says, to be a custom prevalent among the Arabs in every part of the desert, to have regular burial-grounds, whither they carry their dead, sometimes from the distance of several days' journey,\* so that these cemeteries by no means prove the former existence of a city in the vicinity. These rude tombs consist, for the most part, of mere heaps of earth covered with loose stones ; and in the midst of those of Mokbera is the tomb of a Bedoween saint, which is kept carefully covered with fresh herbs. In half an hour further, he began to ascend a steep valley called *Wady Borak*. Here, the rock changes to porphyry with strata of grünstein. The mountains on both sides are much disintegrated, and the bottom of the valley is filled with loose fragments of rock. In two hours and three quarters he reached the summit of *Djebel Leboua* (the mountain of the lioness), from which he descended into a fine valley, several miles in breadth, called *Wady Genne* : it affords good pasturage, and abounds with odoriferous shrubs. The ranges of mountains in this part differ in their formation from most of the Arabian chains ; the valleys reach to the very summits, where they spread into a plain, and thence descend to the other

\* This may illustrate Gen. xxiii, and xlix, 29.

side. To *Wady Genne* succeeded that of *Wady Berah*, which is covered with sand ; and, at the end of ten hours and a half from *Raml Morak*, our Traveller alighted for the night at a Bedoween encampment in the side valley of *Wady Osh*. Here there is a well of sweet water ; and ‘from hence upwards,’ Burckhardt says, ‘and throughout the primitive chain of Mount Sinai, the water is generally excellent ; while, in the lower chalky mountains all around the peninsula, it is brackish, or bitter, except in one or two places.’\* Blocks with inscriptions were continually noticed in this and the next day’s route.

The sixth day, our Traveller did not leave the encampment of hospitable Bedoweens till the afternoon, and proceeded only four hours, to *Wady el Sheikh* (i. e. the great valley), one of the principal valleys of the peninsula. In the rainy season, this *wady*, collecting the waters of *Wadys Osh* and *Berah*, discharges a considerable stream into *Wady Faran*, and thence into the sea. It is much frequented for its pasturage. The next morning, ascending the valley, he reached, in two hours, a thick wood of tamarisk (*tarfa*), an evergreen shrub from which manna is collected : camels feed upon its thorny shoots. ‘We now approached,’ says Burckhardt, ‘the central summits of Mount Sinai, which we had had in view for several days. Abrupt cliffs of granite, from six to eight hundred feet in height, whose surface is blackened by the sun, surround the avenues leading to the elevated platform to which the name of Sinai is specifically applied. These cliffs enclose the holy mountain on three sides, leaving the east and north-east sides only, towards the Gulf of Akaba, more open to view. On both sides of the wood of

\* In *Wady Osh*, gneiss is mixed with granite. Native cinabar is said to be found in a mountain called *Sheyger*, a few hours to the N. E.

tarfa-trees, extends a range of low hills, of a substance called by the Arabs *tafal*, which I believe to be principally a *detritus* of the feldspar of granite, but which, at first sight, has all the appearance of pipe-clay: it is brittle, crumbles easily between the fingers, and leaves upon them its colour, which is a pale yellow. The Arabs sell it at Cairo, where it is in request for taking stains out of cloth, and where it serves the poor instead of soap, but it is chiefly used to rub the skins of asses during summer, to defend them against the heat of the sun. At the end of three hours, we entered the above-mentioned cliffs by a narrow defile about forty feet in breadth, with perpendicular rocks on both sides. The ground is covered with sand and pebbles, brought down by the torrent which rushes from the upper region in the winter time. In a broader part of the pass, an insulated rock about five feet high, with a kind of natural seat, is shown as a place upon which Moses once reposed, whence it has the name of *Mokad Seidna Mousa*. The Bedouins keep it covered with green or dry herbs, and some of them kiss it, or touch it with their hands in passing by. Beyond it the valley opens; the mountains on both sides diverge from the road, and the *Wady el Sheikh* continues in a southerly direction with a slight ascent.' An hour beyond the defile, the route enters a narrow inlet in the eastern chain, and then, crossing the mountain, falls again into the *Wady el Sheikh*. At the end of eight hours, our Traveller reached the tomb of Sheikh Szaleh; a small, rude stone building, surrounded with a thin wooden partition, hung with green cloth, on which several prayers are embroidered. On the walls are suspended silk tassels, handkerchiefs, ostrich eggs, camel halters, bridles, &c, the offerings of the Bedoweens, by whom this spot is the most revered in the peninsula, next to the mountain of Moses.

‘Once a year, all the tribes of the Towara Arabs repair hither in pilgrimage, and remain encamped in the valley round the tomb for three days. The men and women are dressed in their best attire. Many sheep are then killed, camel races are run, and the whole night is passed in dancing and singing. The festival, which is the greatest among this people, usually takes place in the latter part of June, when the Nile begins to rise in Egypt, and the plague subsides. A caravan leaves Sinai immediately afterwards for Cairo. It is just at this period, too, that the dates ripen in the valleys of the lower chain of Sinai, and the pilgrimage to Sheikh Szaleh thus becomes the most remarkable period in the Bedouin year.’\* From this tomb, our Traveller proceeded southward till, at the end of six hours and a half, he turned to the right into a broad valley, at the end of which he was agreeably surprised by the beautiful verdure of a garden of almond-trees belonging to the convent. In an hour beyond this he arrived at the convent itself, being the seventh day from Suez.†

Sir Frederick Henniker descended the Red Sea to Tor, and reached Sinai from that part of the coast.

\* These pilgrimages are generally connected with mereantile speculations. Thus, the tomb of Nebby Osha (the prophet Hosea) near Szalt, is transformed into a fair at the time of the visit of the pilgrims. In the winter season, scarcely any body seeks favours at the shrine of the saint. — See BURCKHARDT, p. 354. Who this Sheikh Szaleh was, is uncertain: some will have him to have been the famous prophet Salah, mentioned in the Koran; others, with more probability, represented him as a local saint. Burckhardt says, the whole valley takes the name of *el Sheikh* from the tomb.

† Mr Fazakerley, who crossed the Gulf of Suez above Ayoun Mousa, reached the convent on the sixth day. Niebuhr crossed on the 6th of Sept. (1762), and did not reach the foot of Djebel Mousa till the 14th, but he went round by *Wady Faran* (the valley of Paran), and lost time on the road.

He describes Tor as 'a wretched hutage, in the occupation of a few families drawn together by twelve springs of water and a grove of palm-trees: for any additional luxuries, they are indebted to a few boats that convey weary pilgrims to and from Mekka. The water is the best that is to be found on the coast, and on this account we see here a fortification, said to have been built by the Portuguese: it is now in decay. Tor,' adds this Traveller, 'is supposed to be the ancient Elim: the number of springs is still *the same*,\* but that of the palm-trees has increased. The mountains east of Tor,' (seen from shipboard,) 'equal any scenery that I ever witnessed in rough and barren nature: they are Alps unclothed. About eight miles north from Tor, and within a short distance from the sea, is a phenomenon called the *narkous*, or bell, near which, so runs the tale, was seen a bodiless hand ringing a bell. Ever since that time, one of the gaps in the rock has chosen occasionally to utter miraculous sounds. The first notice of its anger is a gentle rumbling, which increases gradually till it shames the thunder; and in this state it will continue some hours, during which the sand performs an earthquake. In outward appearance, there is no difference between this and any other of the many neighbouring gaps, which are equally filled with sand.' This Traveller found the 'grumbling' neither so loud nor so long as he had been led to anticipate; but it is difficult to gather any distinct idea of the phenomenon from his careless and jocose narrative. As far as we can make out, the noise is pro-

\* Did Sir Frederik count them? Dr Shaw could see only nine. If the former be correct, the three which the latter Traveller supposes to have been filled up by the sand, have been again cleared. Sir Frederick Henniker says, 'there is another place *named Elim*, between this and Suez.' This must be a mistake. He has probably been misled by the hypothesis which places Elim at Gharendel.

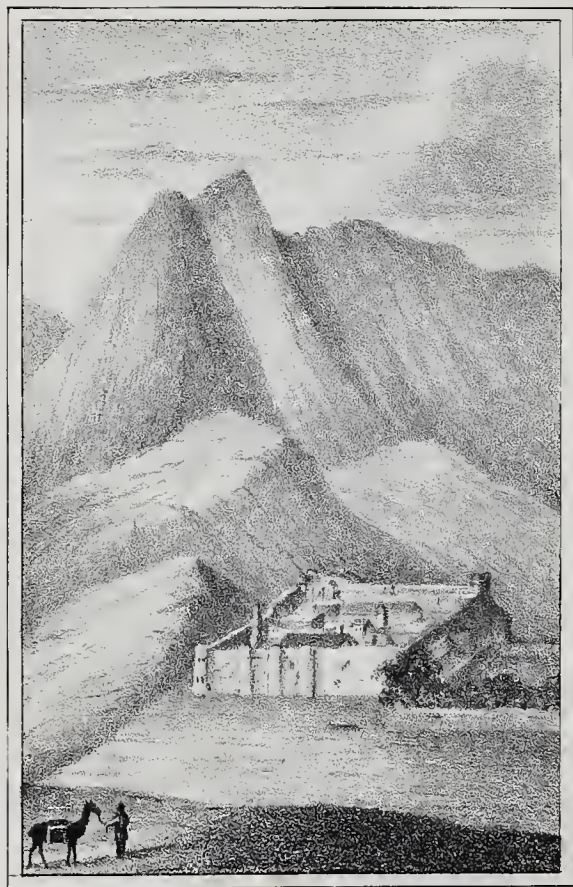


duced simply by the falling of the sand into the subterranean cavity. There are several inscriptions on the rocks in the vicinity. The grove of palms constitutes the chief wealth of the inhabitants of Tor. 'Every tree,' we are told, 'is registered; most of them are entailed property; and they produce marriage portions in dates, — as portions in Holland were formerly given in tulips.' Beyond this sacred grove, a flat sandy plain extends to the foot of the rocky mountains. A narrow fissure in this natural bulwark, through which flows a shallow streamlet, conducts to Mount Sinai. It is so narrow, that the camels were frequently obliged to walk in water. In about an hour, this defile expands into a wider space. Early on the third day, our Traveller arrived at a green valley, whence he had the pleasure of descrying the convent, which has the appearance of a fortress, 'situated at the extremity of a *cul de sac*, formed by overhanging rocks. If I had to represent the end of the world,' says Sir Frederick, 'I would model it from Mount Sinai.'

The convent of Mount Sinai, though usually called after Saint Catherine, its vice-patroness, is dedicated to the Transfiguration. One would have thought, a more illustrious saint than Saint Catherine might have been selected by the monk who *dreamed* where that lady's bones were to be found. In such a scene, it is most revolting to be met by all the fooleries of the Empress Helena, and to find a worship as senseless as that of the golden calf perpetuated within the awful precincts of Sinai. The situation in which the poor fanatics are placed who have immured themselves here, is not a very enviable one. The convent has a door, but it is walled up, and opened only for the archbishop who compounds dearly with the Arabs for this honour.\* On the arrival of a stranger,

\* Niebuhr was told by the Arabs, that the monks enter by a subterraneous passage. Sir F. Henniker says, there is a secret door leading to the garden, but it is seldom opened.





MOUNT SINAI & CONVENT.

*Pendleton's Lithog. & Boston.*

as there is neither bell nor bugle, the warden must be summoned by strength of lungs. His credentials are then demanded, and a string is let down for his letter of introduction. If this proves satisfactory to the prior, a rope, with a stick fixed transversely to the end of it, is let down from a window between thirty and forty feet from the ground, and the pilgrim is hoisted up by a windlass. There, a crowd of priests surround him, to salute him by his newly acquired title of *hadji* (*Χατζη*), and, putting a wax taper into his hand, lead him off in procession to the church, and to the shrine of Saint Catherine, chaunting as they march.\* Sir Frederick Henniker, however, in quality, as it would seem, of a *milordos*, was conducted, after due salutations, to 'the traveller's room.'

The best account of the convent is furnished by Burckhardt. 'The convent of Mount Sinai is situated in a valley so narrow, that one part of the building stands on the side of the western mountain, while a space of twenty paces only is left between its walls and the eastern mountain. The valley is open to the north, from whence approaches the road from Cairo; to the south, close behind the convent, it is shut up by a third mountain, less steep than the other, over which passes the road to Sherim. The convent is an irregular quadrangle of about one hundred and thirty paces, enclosed by high and solid walls built with blocks of granite, and fortified by several small towers. While the French were in Egypt, a part of the east wall which had fallen down, was completely rebuilt by order of General Kleber, who sent workmen here for that purpose. The upper part of the walls in the interior is built of a mixture of granite-sand and

\* This was the reception given to Mr Fazakerley and his companions, their visit being attributed to devout motives: a pilgrimage to Sinai entitles the traveller to the honourable appellation referred to.

gravel, cemented together by mud, which has acquired great hardness.

‘The convent contains eight or ten small courtyards, some of which are neatly laid out in beds of flowers and vegetables; a few date-trees and cypresses also grow there, and great numbers of vines. The distribution of the interior is very irregular, and could not be otherwise, considering the slope upon which the building stands; but the whole is very clean and neat. There are a great number of small rooms in the lower and upper stories, most of which are at present unoccupied. The principal building in the interior is the great church, which, as well as the convent, was built by the Emperor Justinian, but it has subsequently undergone frequent repairs. The form of the church is an oblong square; the roof is supported by a double row of fine granite pillars, which have been covered with a coat of white plaster, perhaps because the natural colour of the stone was not agreeable to the monks, who saw granite on every side of them. The capitals of the columns are of different designs; several of them bear a resemblance to palm branches, while others are a close but coarse imitation of the latest period of Egyptian sculpture, such as is seen at Philæ, and in several temples in Nubia. The dome over the altar still remains as it was constructed by Justinian, whose portrait, together with that of his wife Theodora, may yet be distinguished on the dome, together with a large picture of the Transfiguration, in honour of which event the convent was erected. An abundance of silver lamps, paintings, and portraits of saints adorn the walls round the altar; among the latter is a saint Christopher, with a dog’s head. The floor of the church is finely paved with slabs of marble.

‘The church contains the coffin in which the bones of St Catherine were collected from the neighbouring mountain of St Catherine, where her corpse was



transported after her death by the angels in the service of the monks. The silver lid of a sarcophagus likewise attracts attention; upon it is represented at full length, the figure of the Empress Anne of Russia, who entertained the idea of being interred in the sarcophagus, which she sent here; but the monks were disappointed of this honour. In a small chapel adjoining the church, is shown the place where the Lord is supposed to have appeared to Moses in the burning bush; it is called Alyka, and is considered as the most holy spot in Mount Sinai. Besides the great church, there are twenty-seven smaller churches or chapels dispersed over the convent, in many of which daily masses are read, and in all of them at least one every Sunday.

‘The convent formerly resembled, in its establishment, that of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, which contains churches of various sects of Christians. Every principal sect, except the Calvinists and Protestants, had its churches in the convent of Sinai. I was shown the chapels belonging to the Syrians, Armenians, Copts, and Latins, but they have long been abandoned by their owners: the church of the Latins fell into ruins at the close of the seventeenth century, and has not been rebuilt. But, what is more remarkable than the existence of so many churches, is, that close by the great church stands a Mohammedan mosque, spacious enough to contain two hundred people at prayers. The monks told me, that it was built in the sixteenth century, to prevent the destruction of the convent. Their tradition is as follows. When Selim, the Othman emperor, conquered Egypt, he took a great fancy to a young Greek priest, who falling ill at the time that Selim was returning to Constantinople, was sent by him to this convent to recover his health: the young man died, upon which the emperor, enraged at what he considered to be the work of the priests, gave orders to the governor of

Egypt to destroy all the Christian establishments in the peninsula; of which there were several at that period. The priests of the great convent of Mount Sinai being informed of the preparations making in Egypt to carry these orders into execution, began immediately to build a mosque within their walls, hoping that, for its sake, their house would be spared; it is said that their project was successful, and that ever since, the mosque has been kept in repair.

‘This tradition, however, is contradicted by some old Arabic records kept by the prior, in which I read a circumstantial account how, in the year of the Hedjra 783, some straggling Turkish Hādjis, who had been cut off from the caravan, were brought by the Bedouins to the convent; and, being found to be well educated, and originally from Upper Egypt, were retained here, and a salary settled on them and their descendants, on condition of their becoming the servants of the mosque. The conquest of Egypt by Selim did not take place till A. H. 895. The mosque in the convent of Sinai appears, therefore, to have existed long before the time of Selim. The descendants of these Hādjis, now poor Bedouins, are called Retheny; they still continue to be the servants of the mosque, which they clean on Thursday evenings, and light the lamps; one of them is called the Imam. The mosque is sometimes visited by Moslem pilgrims, but it is only upon the occasion of the presence of some Mussulman of consequence that the call to prayers is made from the minaret.

‘In the convent are two deep and copious wells of spring water. One of them is called the well of Moses, because it is said that he first drank of its water. Another was the work, as the monks say, of an English lord; it bears the date 1760. There is also a reservoir for the reception of rain water.

‘None of the churches or chapels have steeples.

There is a bell, which, I believe, is rung only on Sundays. The usual mode of calling the monks to morning prayers, is by striking with a stick upon a long piece of granite, suspended from ropes, which produces a sound heard all over the convent: close by it hangs a piece of dry wood, which emits a different sound, and summons to vespers. A small tower is shown, which was built forty or fifty years ago for the residence of a Greek patriarch of Constantinople, who was exiled to this place by the orders of the sultan, and who remained here till he died.

‘According to the credited tradition, the origin of the convent of Mount Sinai dates from the fourth century. Helena, the mother of Constantine, is said to have erected here a small church, in commemoration of the place where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush; and in the garden of the convent a small tower is still shown, the foundations of which are said to have been laid by her. The church of Helena drawing many visitors and monks to these mountains, several small convents were erected in different parts of the peninsula, in the course of the next century; but the ill treatment which the monks and hermits suffered from the Bedouins, induced them at last to present a petition to the Emperor Justinian, entreating him to build a fortified convent capable of affording them protection against their oppressors. He granted the request, and sent workmen from Constantinople and Egypt, with orders to erect a large convent upon the top of the mountain of Moses; those, however, to whom the work was entrusted, observing the entire want of water in that spot, built it on the present site. They attempted in vain to cut away the mountain on each side of the building, with a view to prevent the Arabs from taking post here and throwing stones at the monks within. The building being completed, Justinian sent from Constantinople some slaves, natives of the shores of the

Black Sea, to officiate as servants in the convent, who established themselves with their families in the neighbouring valleys. The first prior was Doulas, whose name is still recorded upon a stone built into the wall of one of the buildings in the interior of the convent. The above history is taken from a document in Arabic, preserved by the monks. An Arabic inscription over the gate, in modern characters, states, that Justinian built the convent in the thirtieth year of his reign, as a memorial of himself and his wife Theodora. It is curious to find a passage of the Koran introduced into this inscription; it was probably done by a Moslem sculptor, without the knowledge of the monks.

‘A few years after the completion of the convent, one of the monks is said to have been informed in his sleep, that the corpse of St Catherine, who suffered martyrdom at Alexandria, had been transported by angels to the summit of the highest peak of the surrounding mountains. The monks ascended the mountain in procession, found the bones, and deposited them in their church, which thus acquired an additional claim to the veneration of the Greeks.

‘Monastic establishments seem soon after to have considerably increased throughout the peninsula. Small convents, chapels, and hermitages, the remains of many of which are still visible, were built in various parts of it. The prior told me, that Justinian gave the whole peninsula in property to the convent, and that at the time of the Mohammedan conquest, 6 or 7,000 monks and hermits were dispersed over the mountains, the establishments of the peninsula of Sinai thus resembling those which still exist on the peninsula of Mount Athos.

‘It is a favourite belief of the monks of Mount Sinai, that Mohammed himself, in one of his journeys, alighted under the walls of the convent, and that, impressed with due veneration for the mountain of

Moses, he presented to the convent a firmaun, to secure to it the respect of all his followers. Ali is said to have written it, and Mohammed, who could not write, to have confirmed it by impressing his extended hand, blackened with ink, upon the parchment. This firmaun, it is added, remained in the convent until Selim the First conquered Egypt, when, hearing of the precious relic, he sent for it, and added it to the other relics of Mohammed in the imperial treasury at Constantinople; giving to the convent in return, a copy of the original certified with his own cipher. I have seen the latter, which is kept in the Sinai convent at Cairo, but I do not believe it to be an authentic document. None of the historians of Mohammed, who have recorded the transactions of almost every day of his life, mention his having been at Mount Sinai, either in his earlier youth, or after he set up as a prophet; and it is totally contrary to history, that he should have granted to any Christians such privileges as are mentioned in this firmaun, one of which is, that the Moslems are bound to aid the Christian monks in rebuilding their ruined churches. It is to be observed also, that this document states itself to have been written by Ali, not at the convent, but in the mosque of the prophet at Medinah, in the second year of the Hedjra, and is addressed, not to the convent of Mount Sinai in particular, but to all the Christians and their priests. The names of twenty-two witnesses, followers of Mohammed, are subscribed to it; and in a note it is expressly stated, that the original, written by Ali, was lost, and that the present was copied from a fourth successive copy taken from the original. Hence it appears, that the relation of the priests is at variance with the document to which they refer; and I have little doubt, therefore, that the former is a fable, and the latter a forgery.

‘Notwithstanding the difficulties to which the



monks must have been exposed from the warlike and fanatical followers of the new faith in Syria, Arabia, Egypt, and the Desert, the convent continued uninjured, and defended itself successfully against all the surrounding tribes by the peculiar arms of its possessors, patience, meekness, and money. According to the statement of the monks, their predecessors were made responsible by the sultans of Egypt for the protection of the pilgrim caravans from Cairo to Mekka, on that part of the road which lay along the northern frontiers of their territory from Suez to Akaba. For this purpose they thought it necessary to invite several tribes, and particularly the Szowaleba and the Aleygat, to settle in the fertile valleys of Sinai, in order to serve as protectors of this road. The Bedouins came, but, their power increasing, while that of the monks declined, they in the course of time took possession of the whole peninsula, and confined the monks to their convent. It appears from the original copy of a compact between the monks and the above Bedouins, made in the year of the Hedjra 800, when Sultan Dhaher Bybars reigned in Egypt, that, besides this convent, six others were still existing in the peninsula, exclusive of a number of chapels and hermitages. From a writing on parchment, dated in the A.H. 1053, we find that in that year all these minor establishments had been abandoned, and that the great convent, holding property at Feiran, Tor, and in other fruitful valleys, alone remained. The priests assured me, that they had documents to prove, that all the date valleys and other fertile spots in the gulf of Akaba had been in their possession, and were confirmed to them by the sultans of Egypt; but they either could not or would not show me their archives in detail, without an order from the prior at Cairo: indeed, all their papers appeared to be in great confusion.

‘Whenever a new sultan ascends the throne of

Constantinople, the convent is furnished with a new firmaun, which is transmitted to the Pasha of Egypt; but, as the neighbouring Bedouins, till within a few years, were completely independent of Egypt, the protection of the pashas was of very little use to the monks; and their only dependence was upon their own resources and their means of purchasing and conciliating the friendship, or of appeasing the animosity of the Arabs.

‘At present, there are only twenty-three monks in the convent. They are under the presidency of a Wakyl or prior, but the Ikonómos (Οικονομος), whom the Arabs call the Kolob, is the true head of the community, and manages all its affairs. The order of Sinai monks dispersed over the East, is under the control of an archbishop, in Arabic called the Reys. He is chosen by a council of delegates from Mount Sinai and from the affiliated convent at Cairo, and he is confirmed, *pro formâ*, by the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem. The archbishop can do nothing as to the appropriation of the funds without the unanimous vote of the council. Formerly he lived in the convent; but since its affairs have been on the decline, it has been found more expedient that he should reside abroad, his presence here entitling the Bedouins to great fees, particularly on his entrance into the convent. I was told, that ten thousand dollars would be required, on such an occasion, to fulfil all the obligations to which the community is bound in its treaties with the Arabs. Hence it happens that no archbishop has been here since the year 1760, when the Reys Kyrillos resided, and I believe died, in the convent. I was informed that the gate has remained walled up since the year 1709, (1769?) but that if an archbishop were to come, it must be again opened to admit him, and that all the Bedouin sheikhs then have a right to enter within the walls.

‘ Besides the convent at Cairo, which contains a prior and about fifty monks, Mount Sinai has establishments and landed property in many other parts of the East, especially in the Archipelago and at Candia: it has also a small church at Calcutta, and another at Surat.

‘ The discipline of these monks, with regard to food and prayer, is very severe. They are obliged to attend mass twice in the day and twice in the night. The rule is, that they shall taste no flesh whatever all the year round; and in their great fast, they not only abstain from butter and every kind of animal food and fish, but also from oil, and live four days in the week on bread and boiled vegetables, of which one small dish is all their dinner. They obtain their vegetables from a pleasant garden adjoining the building, into which there is a subterraneous passage. The soil is stony, but, in this climate, wherever water is in plenty, the very rocks will produce vegetation. The fruit is of the finest quality: oranges, lemons, almonds, mulberries, apricots, peaches, pears, apples, olives, nebek-trees, and a few cypresses, overshadow the beds in which melons, beans, lettuces, onions, cucumbers, and all sorts of culinary and sweet-scented herbs are sown. The garden, however, is very seldom visited by the monks, except by the few whose business it is to keep it in order; for, although surrounded by high walls, it is not inaccessible to the Bedouins, who, for the last three years, have been the sole gatherers of the fruits, leaving the vegetables only for the monks: they have thus been obliged to re-purchase their own fruit from the pilferers, or to buy it in other parts of the peninsula.

‘ The excellent air of the convent, and the simple fare of the inhabitants, render diseases rare. Many of the monks are very old men, in the full possession of their mental and bodily faculties. They have all taken to some profession, — a mode of rendering them-

selves independent of Egypt, which was practised here, even when the three hundred private chambers were occupied, which are now empty, though still ready for the accommodation of pious settlers. Among the twenty-three monks who now remain, there is a cook, a distiller, a baker, a shoemaker, a tailor, a carpenter, a smith, a mason, a gardener, a maker of candles, &c, &c. Each of these has his work-shop, in the worn-out and rusty utensils of which are still to be seen the traces of the former riches and industry of the establishment. The rooms in which the provisions are kept, are vaulted, and built of granite, with great solidity: each kind of provision has its purveyor. The bake-house and distillery are still kept up upon a large scale. The best bread is of the finest quality, but the second and third sorts are made for the Bedouins who are fed by the convent. In the distillery, they make brandy from dates, which is the only solace these recluses enjoy, and in this they are permitted to indulge even during the fasts.

‘Most of the monks are natives of the Greek islands. In general, they do not remain more than four or five years, when they return to their own country, proud of having been sufferers among Bedouins: some, however, have been here forty years. A few of them only understood Arabic; but none of them write or read it. Being of the lower orders of society, and educated only in convents, they are extremely ignorant. Few of them read even the modern Greek fluently, excepting in their prayer-books; and I found but one who had any notion of the ancient Greek. They have a good library, but it is always shut up; it contains about fifteen hundred Greek volumes, and seven hundred Arabic manuscripts: the latter, which I examined volume after volume, consist entirely of books of prayer, copies of the Gospels, lives of saints, liturgies, &c. A thick folio volume of the works of Lokman, edited,



according to the Arab tradition, by Hormus, the ancient king of Egypt, was the only one worth attention. The prior would not permit it to be taken away, but he made me a present of a fine copy of the Aldine Odyssey, and an equally fine one of the Anthology. In the room anciently the residence of the archbishop, which is very elegantly paved with marble, and extremely well furnished, though at present unoccupied, is preserved a beautiful ancient manuscript of the Gospels in Greek, which, I was told, was given to the convent by 'an emperor called Theodosius.' It is written in letters of gold upon vellum, and ornamented with portraits of the apostles.

'Notwithstanding the ignorance of these monks, they are fond of seeing strangers in their wilderness; and I met with a more cordial reception among them, than I did in the convents of Libanus, which are in possession of all the luxuries of life. The monks of Sinai are even generous. Three years ago, they furnished a Servian adventurer, who styled himself a Knes, and pretended to be well known to the Russian Government, with sixty dollars, to pay his journey back to Alexandria, on his informing them of his destitute circumstances.

'At present, the convent is seldom visited: a few Greeks from Cairo and Suez, and the inhabitants of Tor, who repair here every summer, and encamp with their families in the garden, are the only persons who venture to undertake the journey through the desert. So late as the last century, regular caravans of pilgrims used to come here from Cairo as well as from Jerusalem. A document preserved by the monks, states the arrival in one day of eight hundred Armenians from Jerusalem, and, at another time, of five hundred Copts from Cairo. I believe that from sixty to eighty is the greatest number of visitors that can now be reckoned in a year.



‘The only habitual visitors of the convent are the Bedouins. They have established the custom, that whoever amongst them, whether man, woman, or child, comes here, is to receive bread for breakfast and supper, which is lowered down to them from the window, as no Bedouins, except the servants of the house, are ever admitted within the walls. Fortunately for the monks, there are no good pasturing-places in their immediate neighbourhood; the Arab encampments are therefore always at some distance, and visitors are thus not so frequent as might be supposed; yet, scarcely a day passes without their having to furnish bread to thirty or forty persons. In the last century, the Bedouins enjoyed still greater privileges, and had a right to call for a dish of cooked meat at breakfast, and for another at supper: the monks could not have given a stronger proof of their address, than by obtaining the abandonment of this right from men in whose power they are so completely placed. The convent of Sinai at Cairo is subject to similar claims; all the Bedouins of the peninsula who repair to that city on their private business, receive their daily meal from the monks, who, not having the same excuses as their brethren of Mount Sinai, are obliged to supply a dish of cooked meat. The convent has its ghafcirs, or protectors, twenty-four in number, among the tribes inhabiting the desert between Syria and the Red Sea; but the more remote of them are entitled only to some annual presents in clothes and money, while the Towara ghafcirs are continually hovering round the walls, to extort as much as they can. Of the Towara Arabs, the tribes of Szowalcha and Aleygat only are considered as protectors; the Mezeine, who came in later times to the peninsula, have no claims; and of the Szowaleha tribe, the branches Oulad Said and Owareme are exclusively the protectors, while

the Koreysh and Rahamy are not only excluded from the right of protection, but also from the transport of passengers and loads. Of the Oulad Said, each individual receives an annual gift of a dollar, and the ghafeir of this branch of the Szowaleha is the convent's chief man of business in the desert. If a sheikh or head man calls at the convent, he receives, in addition to his bread, some coffee-beans, sugar, soap, sometimes a handkerchief, a little medicine, &c, &c.

‘Under such circumstances, it may easily be conceived that disputes continually happen. If a sheikh from the protecting tribes comes to the convent to demand coffee, sugar, or clothing, and is not well satisfied with what he receives, he immediately becomes the enemy of the monks, lays waste some of their gardens, and must at last be gained over by a present. The independent state of the Bedouins of Sinai had long prevented the monks from endeavouring to obtain protection from the Government of Egypt, whose power in the peninsula being trifling, they would only by complaining have exasperated the Bedouins against them; their differences, therefore, had hitherto been accommodated by the mediation of other sheikhs. It was not till 1816 that they solicited the protection of Mohammed Ali; this will secure them for the present against their neighbours; but it will, probably, as I told the monks, be detrimental to them in the end. Ten or twenty dollars were sufficient to pacify the fiercest Bedouin; but a Turkish governor will demand a thousand for any effectual protection.

‘The Arabs, when discontented, have sometimes seized a monk in the mountains, and given him a severe beating, or have thrown stones or fired their muskets into the convent from the neighbouring heights: about twenty years ago, a monk was killed by them. The monks, in their turn, have fired occa-

sionally upon the Bedouins, for they have a well-furnished armoury and two small cannon, but they take great care never to kill any one. And though they dislike such turbulent neighbours, and describe them to strangers as very devils, yet, they have sense enough to perceive the advantages which they derive from the better traits in the Bedouin character, such as their general good faith, and their placability. "If our convent," as they have observed to me, "had been subject to the revolutions and oppressions of Egypt or Syria, it would long ago have been abandoned; but Providence has preserved us by giving us Bedouins for neighbours."

Notwithstanding the greediness of the Bedouins, I have reason to believe that the expenses of the convent are very moderate. Each monk is supplied annually with two coarse woollen cloaks, and no splendour is any where displayed, except in the furniture of the great church, and that of the Archbishop's room. The supplies are drawn from Egypt; but the communication by caravans with Cairo is far from being regular, and the ikonómos assured me that, at the time I was there, the house did not contain more than one month's provision.

The yearly consumption of corn is about one hundred and sixty erdebs, or two thousand five hundred bushels, which is sufficient to cover all the demands of the Bedouins; and I believe that 1000*l* sterling, or 4000 dollars, is the utmost of the annual expenditure. The convent at Cairo expends perhaps two or three times that sum. The monks complain greatly of poverty; and the prior assured me, that he sometimes has not a farthing left to pay for the corn that is brought to him, and is obliged to borrow money from the Bedouins at high interest. But an appearance of poverty is one of their great protections; and considering the possessions of this convent abroad, and

the presents which it receives from pilgrims, I am much inclined to doubt the prior's assertion.\*

Sir Frederick Henniker found thirty resident monks here; and there are, he says, the same number of 'travelling fellows,' who go from place to place to beg for the convent. The superior had been resident here forty-five years. One old monk, just arrived from Cairo in thirty days, said that he had been a member of the establishment seventy years.

After reposing in the convent and its delightful garden, the first duty of a pilgrim is, to climb the summit of the *Djebel Mousa*, or mountain of Moses, the road to which begins to ascend immediately behind the walls of the convent. Regular steps (it is said, to the number of 15,000†) have been cut all the way up; but they are now either entirely destroyed, or so much damaged by the winter torrents, as to be of very little use. They are ascribed to the munificence of the Empress Helena. 'After ascending for about twenty-five minutes,' says Burckhardt, 'we breathed a short time under a large impending rock, close by which is a small well of water, as cold as ice. At the end of three quarters of an hour's steep ascent, we came to a small plain, the entrance to which from below is through a stone gateway, which in former times was probably closed: a little beneath it, stands, amidst the rocks, a small church dedicated to the Virgin. On the plain is a larger building of rude construction, which bears the name of the convent of St Elias: it was lately inhabited, but is now abandoned, the monks repairing here only at certain times of the year to read mass. Pilgrims usually halt on this spot, where a tall cypress-tree grows by the side of a stone tank, which receives the winter rains. On

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 551 — 557.

† Journal from Grand Cairo to Mount Sinai, translated by the Right Rev. Rob. Clayton, Lord Bishop of Clogher.



a large rock in the plain are several Arabic inscriptions, engraved by pilgrims three or four hundred years ago; I saw one also in the Syriac language.

‘According to the Koran and Moslem traditions, it was in this part of the mountain, which is called Djebel Oreb, or Horeb, that Moses communicated with the Lord. From hence a still steeper ascent of half an hour, the steps of which are also in ruins, leads to the summit of Djebel Mousa, where stands the church which forms the principal object of the pilgrimage: it is built on the very peak of the mountain, the plane of which is at most sixty paces in circumference. The church, though strongly built with granite, is now greatly dilapidated by the unremitted attempts of the Arabs to destroy it; the door, roof, and walls are greatly injured. Szalch, the present Sheikh of the Towara, with his tribe the Korashy, was the principal instrument in the work of destruction, because, not being entitled to any tribute from the convent, they are particularly hostile to the monks. Some ruins round the church indicate that a much larger and more solid building once stood here; and the rock appears to have been cut perpendicularly with great labour, to prevent any other approach to it than by the southern side. The view from this summit must be very grand, but a thick fog prevented me from seeing even the nearest mountains.

‘About thirty paces from the church, on a somewhat lower peak, stands a poor mosque, without any ornaments, held in great veneration by the Moslems, and the place of their pilgrimage. It is frequently visited by the Bedouins, who slaughter sheep in honour of Moses, and who make vows to him, and entreat his intercession in heaven in their favour. There is a feast-day on which the Bedouins come hither in a mass, and offer their sacrifices. I was told, that formerly they never approached the place with-



out being dressed in the Ihram, or sacred mantle, with which the Moslems cover their naked bodies on visiting Mekka, and which then consisted only of a napkin tied round the middle; but this custom has been abandoned for the last forty years. Foreign Moslem pilgrims often repair to the spot; and even Mohammed Ali Pasha, and his son Tousoun Pasha, gave notice that they intended to visit it, but they did not keep their promise. Close by the footpath, in the ascent from St Elias to this summit, and at a small distance from it, a place is shown in the rock, which somewhat resembles the print of the fore-part of the foot; it is stated to have been made by Mohammed's foot when he visited the mountain. We found the adjacent part of the rock sprinkled with blood, in consequence of an accident which happened a few days before to a Turkish lady of rank, who was on her way from Cairo to Mekka, with her son, and who had resided for some weeks in the convent, during which she made the tour of the sacred places, bare-footed, although she was old and decrepit. In attempting to kiss the mark of Mohammed's foot, she fell, and wounded her head, but not so severely as to prevent her from pursuing her pilgrimage. Somewhat below the mosque is a fine reservoir, cut very deep in the granite rock, for the reception of rain water.

‘The Arabs believe that the tables of the Commandments are buried beneath the pavement of the church on Djebel Mousa, and they have made excavations on every side, in the hope of finding them. They more particularly revere this spot from a belief that the rains which fall in the peninsula are under the immediate control of Moses; and they are persuaded that the priests of the convent are in possession of the Taourat, a book sent down to Moses from heaven, upon the opening and shutting of which depend the rains of the peninsula. The reputation which the monks have thus obtained of having the

dispensation of the rains in their hands, has become very troublesome to them, but they have brought it on by their own measures for enhancing their credit with the Bedouins. In times of dearth, they were accustomed to proceed in a body to Djebel Mousa, to pray for rain, and they encouraged the belief that the rain was due to their intercessions. By a natural inference, the Bedouins have concluded, that, if the monks could bring rain, they had it likewise in their power to withhold it; and the consequence is, that whenever a dearth happens, they accuse the monks of malevolence, and often tumultuously assemble and compel them to repair to the mountain to pray. Some years since, soon after an occurrence of this kind, it happened that a violent flood burst over the peninsula, and destroyed many date-trees. A Bedouin, whose camels and sheep had been swept away by the torrent, went in a fury to the convent, and fired his gun at it, and, when asked the reason, exclaimed — “ You have opened the book so much that we are all drowned!” He was pacified by presents; but, on departing, he begged that in future the monks would only half open the Tacurat, in order that the rains might be more moderate.

‘ The supposed influence of the monks is, however, sometimes attended with more fortunate results. The Sheikh Szaleh had never been father of a male child; and on being told that Providence had thus punished him for his enmity to the convent, he two years ago brought a load of butter to the monks, and entreated them to go to the mountain and pray that his newly married wife, who was then pregnant, might be delivered of a son. The monks complied, and Szaleh soon after became the happy father of a fine boy; since that period, he has been the friend of the convent, and has even partly repaired the church on Djebel Mousa. This summit was formerly inhabited by the

monks, but at present they visit it only in time of festivals.

‘ We returned to the convent of St Elias, and then descended on the western side of the mountain for half an hour by another decayed flight of steps, into a valley where is a small convent called El Erbayn, or the forty : it is in good repair, and is at present inhabited by a family of Djebalye, who take care of the garden annexed to it, which affords a pleasing place of rest to those who descend from the barren mountains above. In its neighbourhood are extensive olive-plantations; but I was told that, for the last five summers, the locusts had devoured both the fruit and foliage of these trees, upon which they alight in preference to all others. This insect is not less dreaded here than in Arabia, Syria, and Egypt; but the Bedouins of Mount Sinai, unlike those of Arabia, instead of eating them, hold them in great abhorrence.’

The convent of the Forty Martyrs is situated in the midst of the valley lying between *Djebel Mousa* on the east, and *Djebel Katerin* (Mount Catherine) on the west. The latter is the loftier and more picturesque peak of the two, and the ascent is very difficult. At about an hour from the convent, the pilgrim arrives at a small spring, called *Bir Shonnar* (the well of the partridge), so named, because it was first discovered to some thirsty monks by a bird’s flying up from the spot.\* It is closely surrounded with rocks, and is not more than a foot in diameter, and as much in depth; but the Bedowens say, that it never dries up, and that its water, even when exposed to the

\* ‘ This fountain, the Greeks say, broke out miraculously when the body of St Catherine was carried from this mountain to the great convent; at which time the bearers of her corpse being ready to perish with thirst, the partridges which attended her funeral from the summit of the mountain, conducted them to this place, and discovered the fountain to them.’—*Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai.*

sun, is as cold as ice. Several trees grow near it ; among others, the *zarour*, which bears a fruit resembling in flavour the strawberry. This side of the *Djebel Katerin* is noted for its excellent pasturage : herbs sprout up every where between the rocks, and, as many of them are odoriferous, the scent early in the morning, when the dew falls, is delicious. A botanist, Burckhardt says, would find a rich harvest here.\* He mentions in particular, the *zattar* (*ocimum zatarhendi*), which affords the best possible food for sheep, and the *euphorbia retusa* of Forskal, bearing a pretty red flower, which abounds in the valleys of Sinai, and is seen among the most barren granitic rocks. 'In the month of June, when the herbs are in blossom, the monks repair to this and the surrounding mountains, in order to collect various herbs, which they dry and send to the convent at Cairo, whence they are despatched to the Archbishop of Sinai, who distributes them to his friends and dependents : they are supposed to possess many virtues conducive to health.' In winter, when the whole of the upper Sinai is deeply covered with snow, and many of the passes are choked up, the mountains of Moses and St Catherine are often inaccessible. Mr Fazakerley, who ascended them in the month of February, found a great deal of snow, and the ascent was 'severe ;' but upon the whole, he adds, 'we fared better than Pietro della Valle, who went up in a violent snow-storm, and gives a lamentable account of his adventures here.' The English Traveller reached the summit at the end of three hours from the convent of the Forty Martyrs. There have formerly been steps, but these are entirely destroyed.

\* And the geologist too, according to Bishop Clayton's document, which speaks of abundance of curious stones, and pendent rocks marked with the most beautiful veins, shooting forth in the resemblance of trees.



The mountain terminates, like the Djebel Mousa, in a sharp peak, consisting of an immense block of granite, the surface of which is so smooth, that it is very difficult to climb it. Luxuriant vegetation reaches up to this rock. On its summit, there is nothing to excite attention, but a small chapel (Mr Fazakerley calls it 'a shed') hardly high enough to allow a person to stand upright within it, and badly built of loose, uncemented stones. The floor is the bare rock, in which, says Burckhardt, solid as it is, the body of St Catherine is believed to have been miraculously buried by angels after her martyrdom at Alexandria.\*

Mr Fazakerley says, it is difficult to imagine a scene more desolate and terrific than that which is discovered from the summit of Sinai. A haze limited the prospect, and, except a glimpse of the sea in one direction, nothing was within sight but snow, and huge peaks and crags of naked granite. Sir F. Henniker describes it as a 'sea of desolation.' 'It would seem,' he says, 'as if Arabia Petræa had once been an ocean of lava, and that while its waves were running literally mountains high, it was commanded suddenly to stand still.' He did not ascend the *Djebel Katerin*; but the former Traveller did, and speaks of it in the following terms: 'The view from hence is of the same kind, only much more extensive than from the top of Sinai: it commands the two seas (gulfs) of Akaba and Suez; the island of Tiraan and the village of Tor were pointed out to us; Sinai was far below us; clouds prevented our seeing the high ground near Suez: all the rest, wherever the eye could reach, was a vast wilderness, and a confusion of granite mountains and valleys destitute of ver-

\* This is rather an embellishment of the legend. According to the Journal translated by Bishop Clayton, the body was laid on the surface; and the impression which it made on the road, 'still remains to be seen.' It is *seven* feet in length!



dure.' Burckhardt thus describes the country as seen from this same summit: 'From this elevated peak, a very extensive view opened before us, and the direction of the different surrounding chains of mountains could be distinctly traced. The upper nucleus of the Sinai, composed almost entirely of granite, forms a rocky wilderness of an irregular circular shape, intersected by many narrow valleys, and from thirty to forty miles in diameter. It contains the highest mountains of the peninsula, whose shaggy and pointed peaks, and steep and shattered sides, render it clearly distinguishable from all the rest of the country in view. It is upon this highest region of the peninsula, that the fertile valleys are found, which produce fruit-trees: they are principally to the west and south-west of the convent, at three or four hours' distance. Water, too, is always found in plenty in this district, on which account it is the place of refuge of all the Bedouins, when the low country is parched up.

'I think it very probable that this upper country or wilderness is, exclusively, the *Desert of Sinai*, so often mentioned in the account of the wanderings of the Israelites. Mount St Catherine appears to stand nearly in the centre of it. To the northward of this central region, and divided from it by the broad valley called *Wady el Sheikh*, and by several minor *wadys*, begins a lower range of mountains, called *Zebeir*, which extends eastward, having at one extremity the two peaks called *El Djoze*, above the plantations of *Wady Feiran*, and losing itself to the east in the more open country towards *Wady Sal*. Beyond the *Zebeir* northward, are sandy plains and valleys, which I crossed toward the west at *Raml el Moral*, and toward the east about *Hadhra*. This part is the most barren and destitute of water of the whole country. At its eastern extremity it is called *El Birka*. It borders to the north on the chain of *El Tyh*, which stretches

in a regular line eastward, parallel with the Zebeir, beginning at *Sarbout el Djemel*. On reaching, in its eastern course, the somewhat higher mountain called *El Odjme*, it separates into two. One of its branches turns off in a right angle northward, and after continuing for about fifteen miles in that direction, again turns to the east, and extends parallel with the second and southern branch all across the peninsula, towards the eastern gulf. The northern branch, which is called *El Dhehel*, bounds the view from Mount St Catherine. On turning to the east, I found that the mountains in this direction beyond the high district of Sinai, run in a lower range towards the *Wady Sal*, and that the slope of the upper mountain is much less abrupt than on the opposite side. From Sal, east and north-east, the chains intersect each other in many irregular masses of inferior height, till they reach the gulf of Akaba, which I clearly distinguished when the sun was just rising over the mountains of the Arabian coast. Excepting the short extent from Noweyba to Dahab, the mountains bordering on the gulf are all of secondary height, but they rise to a considerable elevation between those two points. The country between Sherm, Nabk, and the convent, is occupied also by mountains of minor size; and the valleys generally are so narrow, that few of them can be distinguished from the point where I stood, the whole country, in that direction, appearing an uninterrupted wilderness of barren mountains. The highest points on that side appear to be above *Wady Kyd*, above the valley of Naszeb, and principally the peaks called *Om Khehsyn* and *Masaoud*.

‘The view to the south was bounded by the high mountain of Om Shomar, which forms a nucleus of itself, apparently unconnected with the upper Sinai, although bordering close upon it. To the right of this mountain, I could distinguish the sea in the neighbourhood of Tor, near which begins a low cal-

careous chain of mountains called *Djebel Hemam*, i. e. death, (not *Hamam*, or bath,) extending along the gulf of Suez, and separated from the upper Sinai by a broad, gravelly plain, called *El Kaa*, across which the road from Tor to Suez passes. This plain terminates to the W.N.W. of Mount St Catherine, and nearly in the direction of *Djebel Serbal*. Towards the Kaa, the central Sinai mountains are very abrupt, and leave no secondary intermediate chain between them and the chain at their feet. The mountain of Serbal is separated from the upper Sinai by some valleys, especially *Wady Hebran*; and it forms, with several neighbouring mountains, a separate cluster, terminating in peaks, the highest of which appears to be as high as Mount St Catherine. Its borders are the *Wady Feiran* and the chain of *Zebein*.\*

The climate of the valley in which the convent of *El Erbayn* stands, is described by Burckhardt as most delightful. A good garden and orchard are attached to the convent; and so brilliant was the verdure, and so aromatic the perfume of the orange-trees, that he fancied himself transported from the barren cliffs of the wilderness to the luxurious groves of Antioch. 'It is surprising,' he says, 'that the Europeans resident at Cairo do not prefer spending the season of the plague in these pleasant gardens and this delightful climate, to remaining close prisoners in the infected city.' While in the lower country, and particularly on the sea-shore, the thermometer is often at from  $402^{\circ}$  to  $105^{\circ}$ , and sometimes as high even as  $110^{\circ}$ ; in the convent, in the month of May, the

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 573—5. Several bearings are given. El Djoze bore N. W. by N.; Sarbout el Djemel, N. W. 1-4 N.; El Odjme, N. 1-2 E.; Wady Naszeb, extending S. E. and E. S. E.; Dahab, E. S. E.; Djebel Massaoud, S. E. by E.; Wady Kyd, S. E.; Om Shomar, S. S. W.; Tor, S. W.; Serbal, N. W. 1-2 W.

maximum was 75°. The semoum never reaches these upper regions, and the climate differs so much from that of Cairo, that apricots, which are in season towards the latter days of April in Egypt, are not ripe in the desert of Sinai till the middle of June. The valley in which the Erbayn stands, is very narrow and stony, many large blocks having rolled into it from the mountains: it is called *El-Ledja*.\*

At twenty minutes' walk from the convent of *El Erbayn*, a block of granite is shown as the rock out of which the water issued when struck by the rod of Moses.† It is thus described by Burckhardt: 'It lies quite insulated by the side of the path, which is about ten feet higher than the lower bottom of the valley. The rock is about twelve feet in height, of an irregular shape, approaching to a cube. There are some apertures upon its surface, through which the water is said to have burst out; they are about twenty in number, and lie nearly in a straight line round the three sides of the stone. They are for the most part ten or twelve inches long, two or three inches broad, and from one to two inches deep, but a few of them are as deep as four inches. Every observer must be convinced, on the slightest examination, that most of these fissures are the work of art; but three or four perhaps are natural, and these may have first drawn the attention of the monks to the stone, and have induced them to call it the rock of the miraculous supply of water. Besides the marks of art evident in the holes themselves, the spaces between them have been chiselled, so as to make it appear as if the stone had been worn in those parts by the action of the water; though it cannot be doubted, that if water had flowed from the fissures, it must generally have taken quite a different direction. One Traveller‡ saw

\* The name given to a similar rocky district in the Haouran.

† In the valley of Rephidim. Exod. xvii, 7.

‡ Breydenbach.



on this stone twelve openings, answering to the number of the tribes of Israel; another\* describes the holes as a foot deep. They were probably told so by the monks, and believed what they heard, rather than what they saw.

‘About 150 paces further on in the valley, lies another piece of rock, upon which it seems that the work of deception was first begun, there being four or five apertures cut in it, similar to those on the other block, but in a less finished state. As it is somewhat smaller than the former, and lies in a less conspicuous part of the valley, removed from the public path, the monks thought proper, in process of time, to assign the miracle to the other. As the rock of Moses has been described by travellers of the fifteenth century, the deception must have originated among the monks of an earlier period. As to the present inhabitants of the convent and of the peninsula, they must be acquitted of any fraud respecting it, for they conscientiously believe that it is the very rock from whence the water gushed forth. In this part of the peninsula, the Israelites could not have suffered from thirst. The upper Sinai is full of wells and springs, the greater part of which are perennial; and on whichever side the pretended rock of Moses is approached, copious sources are found within an hour of it. The rock is greatly venerated by the Bedouins, who put grass into the fissures, as offerings to the memory of Moses, in the same manner as they place grass upon the tombs of their saint, because grass is to them the most precious gift of nature, and that upon which their existence chiefly depends. They also bring hither their female camels, for they believe that by making the animal couch down before the rock, while they recite some prayers, and by putting fresh grass into the fissures of the stone, the camels will become fertile, and yield

\* Sicard.



an abundance of milk. The superstition is encouraged by the monks, who rejoice to see the infidel Bedouins venerating the same object as themselves. . . . A little further down is shown the seat of Moses, where it is said that he often sat: it is a small and apparently natural excavation in a granite rock, resembling a chair. Near this is the *petrified pot or kettle of Moses*; a name given to a circular, projecting knob in a rock, similar in size and shape to the lid of a kettle. The Arabs have in vain endeavoured to break this rock, which they suppose to contain great treasures.\*

The fact, that this part of the peninsula abounds with perennial springs, which is attested by every traveller, proves decidedly that this cannot be the vale of Rephidim. It is astonishing to find such travellers as Shaw and Pococke credulously adopting this imbecile legend. 'Here,' says the former, 'we still see that extraordinary antiquity, the Rock of Meribah, which hath continued down to this day without the least injury from time or accidents. It is a block of granite marble, about six yards square,† lying tottering, as it were, and loose in the midst of the valley, and seems to have formerly belonged to Mount Sinai, which hangs in a variety of precipices all over this plain. The waters which gushed out, and the stream which flowed withal, have hollowed across one corner of this rock a channel about two inches deep and twenty wide,‡ appearing to be incrustated all over, like the inside of a tea-kettle that hath been long in use. Besides several mossy productions that are still preserved by the dew, we see all over this channel, a great number of holes, some of them four or five

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 578 — 81.

† According to Pococke, it is 15 feet long, 10 wide, and 12 high.

‡ Pococke says, 'about the breadth of eight inches.'

inches deep, and one or two in diameter, *the lively and demonstrative tokens* of their having been formerly so many fountains. It likewise may be further observed, that *art or chance could by no means be concerned in the contrivance*. For every circumstance points out to us a miracle, and, in the same manner with the rent in the rock of Mount Calvary at Jerusalem, never fails to produce a religious surprise in all who see it.\*

That this rock is as truly the Rock of Meribah, as the spot alluded to is *Mount Calvary*, may be freely admitted; but the surprise which they are adapted to awaken in an intelligent observer, is at the credulity of travellers. 'These supernatural mouths,' says Sir F. Henniker, 'appear to me common crevices in the rock:† they are only two inches in depth, and their length is not confined to the water-course. That the incrustation is the effect of water, I have not the slightest doubt, for the rocks close at hand, where water is still dripping, are marked in the same manner: and if a fragment of the cliff were to fall down, we should scarcely distinguish between the two. I therefore doubt the identity of the stone, and also the locality; for, in this place, the miracle would be that a mountain so lofty as Mount Sinai should be without water!'

At about forty minutes' walk from *Erbayn*, where the supposed valley of Rephidim, now called *El Ledja*, opens into a plain extending towards the N.E.,‡ there is a fine garden with the ruins of a

\* Shaw's Travels, p. 352.

† Pococke calls them 'cracks;' and, speaking more cautiously than Shaw, says, that the 'sort of openings or mouths appear not to be the work of a tool.'

‡ In this plain, the rebellion and destruction of Koran, Dathan, and Abiram occurred, if we will believe the monks.—See *Journal from Cairo to Sinai*. That transaction, how-

small convent, called *El Bostan*: it is now in the possession of the Arabs. Water is conducted into it by a small channel from a spring in the Ledja. Burckhardt found it full of apricot-trees and roses in full blossom.\* From this garden it is about half an hour's ride to the great convent of Mount Sinai. In the way is shown 'the head of the golden calf which the Israelites worshipped, transmuted into stone.' Both the monks and the Bedoweens, however, call it *Ras el Bakar* (the cow's head). 'It is a stone, half-buried in the ground, which bears some resemblance to the forehead of a cow. Some travellers,' adds Burckhardt, 'have explained this stone to be the mould in which Aaron cast the calf, though it is not hollow, but projecting; the Arabs and the monks, however, gravely assured me, that it was the 'cow's head' itself. Beyond this object, towards the convent, a hill is pointed out to the left, called *Djebel Haroun*, because it is believed to be the spot where Aaron assembled the seventy elders of Israel. Both this and the cow's head have evidently received these denominations from the monks and Bedoweens, in order that they may multiply the objects of veneration and curiosity within the pilgrim's tour round the convent.'† The place where the brazen serpent was

ever, took place, according to the Scripture narrative, in quite a different part of the peninsula, near Mount Hor. — See Num. xvi.

\* The author of the Journal, &c, says: 'In the said garden are nine very stately cedars, of which two exceed the rest in height, and are of a prodigious size, besides many other trees, such as apples, pears, vines, &c. The little church of St Peter and St Paul stands in the bottom of the garden, as also a small building belonging to the convent, which is inhabited by the Arabs who watch the garden.'

† The Author of the Journal says: 'We came to a place where the Greeks showed us, in the granite marble, which is of a brick-dust colour, a hole or cavity, where, they say, Aaron cast the head of the golden calf. The cavity is, indeed,

erected, the burial-place of Moses and Aaron, the grotto where St Athanasius lived, the pulpit of Moses, and the spot touched by the foot of Mohammed's camel on its way to heaven,—are among the other sacred places pointed out to the credulity of pilgrims, and identified by the authority of the Fathers!

But the greatest curiosity would seem to be the *manna*, which is said to be still found in this part of the peninsula. Mention has already been made of the *tarfa*, or tamarisk-tree, an evergreen shrub which abounds especially in the *Wady el Sheikh*. 'It is from the *tarfa*,' says Burckhardt, 'that the manna is obtained; and it is very strange that the fact should have remained unknown in Europe till M. Seetzen mentioned it in a brief notice of his tour to Sinai. This substance is called by the Bedoween *mann*, and accurately resembles the description of manna given in the Scriptures. In the month of June, it drops from the thorns of the tamarisk upon the fallen twigs, leaves, and thorns which always cover the ground beneath that tree in the natural state. The manna is collected before sunrise, when it is coagulated, but it dissolves as soon as the sun shines upon it. The Arabs clean away the leaves, dirt, &c, which adhere to it, boil it, strain it through a coarse piece of cloth, and put it in leathern skins: in this way they preserve it till the following year, and use it, as they do honey, to pour over their unleavened bread, or to dip their bread into. I could not learn that they ever make it into cakes or loaves. The manna is found only in years when copious rains

formed in such a manner as to afford some small resemblance to the head of a calf, and hath marks in it something like horns: it is in length about two feet and a half, in breadth two feet, and in depth two. At the bottom of it is earth or sand, which seemed to be about three feet deep. . . The Greeks, to impose the more upon the ignorant, say, that though it rain ever so much, no water is seen to lie in this hole.'

have fallen: sometimes it is not produced at all. I saw none of it among the Arabs, but I obtained a small piece of last year's produce in the convent, where, having been kept in the cool shade and moderate temperature of that place, it had become quite solid, and formed a small cake. It became soft when kept some time in the hand: if placed in the sun for five minutes, it dissolved; but, when restored to a cool place, it became solid again in a quarter of an hour. In the season at which the Arabs gather it, it never acquires that state of hardness which will allow of its being pounded, as the Israelites are said to have done, in Num. xi, 3. Its colour is a dirty yellow, and the piece which I saw, was still mixed with bits of tamarisk leaves: its taste is agreeable, somewhat aromatic, and as sweet as honey. If eaten in any considerable quantity, it is said to be slightly purgative. The quantity of manna collected at present, even in seasons when the most copious rains fall, is very trifling, perhaps not amounting to more than five or six hundred pounds. It is entirely consumed among the Bedouins, who consider it as the greatest dainty which their country affords. The harvest is usually in June, and lasts for about six weeks: sometimes it begins in May. There are only particular parts of the *Wady el Sheikh* that produce the tamarisk; but it is also said to grow in *Wady Naszeb*, the fertile valley to the S.E. of the convent, on the road from thence to Sherm.

‘In Nubia, and in every part of Arabia, the tamarisk is one of the most common trees; on the Euphrates, on the Astaboras, in all the valleys of the Hedjaz and the Bedja, it grows in great plenty; but I never heard of its producing manna except in Mount Sinai. It is true, I made no inquiries on the subject elsewhere, and should not perhaps have learned the fact here, had I not asked repeated questions respecting the manna, with a view to an ex-



planation of the Scriptures. The tamarisk abounds more in juices than any other tree of the desert, for it retains its vigour when every vegetable production around it is withered, and never loses its verdure till it dies. It has been remarked by Niebuhr (who, during his journey to Sinai, forgot to inquire after the manna,) that in Mesopotamia, manna is produced by several trees of the oak species. A similar fact was confirmed to me by the son of a Turkish lady, who had passed the greater part of his youth at Erzeroum, in Asia Minor. He told me that at Moush, a town three or four days distant from Erzeroum, a substance is collected from the tree which produces the galls, exactly similar to the manna of the peninsula in taste and consistency, and that it is used by the inhabitants instead of honey.\*

The substance alluded to in the last sentence, is probably the *gum tragacanth*, which is obtained from a spinous papilionaceous shrub of the genus *astragalus*, and which is of so strong a body, that a dram of it will give a pint of water the consistency of a syrup. The *tragacantha* is indigenous in Natolia, Crete, and Greece. That which Burckhardt saw, would seem to be the *gum-arabic* to which he refers in another part of his travels. Describing the *Wady Lahyane*, between Akaba and Ghaza, he says: 'The Arabs had chosen this place, that their camels might feed upon the thorny branches of the *gum-arabic tree*, of which they are extremely fond. These poor people had no tents with them, and their only shelter from the burning rays of the sun and the heavy dews of night, were the scanty branches of the *talh-trees*. The ground was covered with the large thorns of these trees, which are a great annoyance to the Bedouins and their cattle. In the summer, they collect the *gum-arabic*, which they sell at Cairo for

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 569 — 601.

about twelve or fifteen shillings per cwt, English; but the gum is of very inferior quality to that of Sennaar. My companions ate up all the small pieces that had been left upon the trees by the road-side. I found it to be quite tasteless, but I was assured that it was very nutritive.\* A little after, however, he says: 'The acacia-trees of the valley (*Wady Nabk*) were thickly covered with gum-arabic. The Towara Arabs often bring to Cairo loads of it, which they collect in these mountains, but it is much less esteemed than that from Soudan. I found it of *a somewhat sweet and rather agreeable taste*. The Bedouins pretend that, upon journeys, it is a preventive of thirst, and that the person who chews it may pass a whole day without feeling any inconvenience from the want of water.'

If the *talh*, or gum-arabic tree, be not the same as the *tarfa*, or tamarisk, it is evidently a shrub of the same genus, and the supposed manna must be either the real gum-arabic, or a vegetable substance of the same kind. The gum-arabic tree has been supposed to be the *acacia vera*, or Egyptian thorn (the *mimosa nilotica* of Linnæus), which, Hasselquist says, the Egyptian Arabs call *charad*. This Traveller represents the same plant as producing the gum-arabic, the gum *thus*, or frankincense, and the *succus acaciæ*. It is more probable that they are the gums of different species of lomentaceous shrubs. The gum-senegal is believed to be obtained from some species of

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 446, 533. Hasselquist gives a striking instance of the nutritive properties of gum-arabic. In the year 1750, the Abyssinian caravan, which crosses the desert of Africa to Cairo, found their provisions consumed when they had yet two months to travel; they were consequently 'obliged to search for something among their merchandise, wherewith they might support life in this extremity, and found nothing more proper than gum-arabic, of which they had carried a considerable quantity with them. This served to support above 1,000 persons for two months.'

mimosa, or acacia.\* Burckhardt mentions a mimosa, called the *syale*, the bark of which is used to tan leather, and which doubtless, therefore, contains a gum-resin. From the vague and general terms, however, in which this Traveller speaks of 'thorny mimosas,' tamarisks, and acacias of different species, it is impossible to ascertain what are the distinctive marks of the *talh*, the *tarfa*, the *syale*, and the other varieties, or whether any species of vetch or astragalus may be found in these valleys. In another place, describing the productions of the Ghor, or valley of the Jordan, he mentions two other trees as producing a vegetable gum. 'One of the most interesting productions of this valley,' he says, 'is the Beyrouk honey, or, as the Arabs call it, *Assal Beyrouk*. I suppose it to be the manna, but I never had an opportunity of seeing it myself. It was described to me as a juice dropping from the leaves and twigs of a tree called *gharrab*, of the size of an olive-tree, with leaves like those of a poplar, but somewhat broader. The honey collects upon the

\* Hasselquist represents the *mimosa nilotica* and the *mimosa senegal* as growing together promiscuously in Egypt; but the latter, he says, is of no use or value. The former is the *charad*; the latter the Egyptians call *fetne*. But, unless the gum-senegal be the same gum under a different name as the gum-arabic, either the *fetne* must require a warmer climate to be productive, or it cannot be the real gum-senegal. 'The gum,' says Hasselquist, 'is gathered in vast quantities from the trees growing in Arabia Petræa, near the north bay of the Red Sea, at the foot of Mount Sinai, whence they bring the gum thus (frankincense), so called by the dealers in drugs in Egypt from Thur or Thor, which is the name of a harbour near Mount Sinai; thereby distinguishing it from the gum-arabic which is brought from Suez. Besides the different places from which these gums are brought, they differ also in some other particulars. The gum thus is more pellucid, white, or of no colour at all; but the gum-arabic is less pellucid, and of a brownish or dirty yellow colour.' This exactly corresponds to Burckhardt's description of the manna he saw in the great convent.

leaves like dew, and is gathered from them, or from the ground under the tree, which is often found completely covered with it. According to some, its colour is brownish; others said, it was of a grayish hue. It is very sweet when fresh, but turns sour after being kept two days. The Arabs eat it like honey with butter; they also put it in their gruel, and use it in rubbing their water-skins, in order to exclude the air. I inquired whether it was a laxative, but was answered in the negative. The Beyrouk honey is collected only in the months of May and June. Some persons assured me, that the same substance is likewise produced by the thorny tree *tereshresh*, and collected at the same time as that from the *gharrab*.<sup>\*</sup> As this description is given on hearsay information, and the accounts did not entirely agree, we cannot absolutely depend upon its accuracy. From the similarity of the name, the *gharrab* would appear to be the *charad* of Hasselquist; and the description sufficiently corresponds to that given of the tamarisk, to warrant our referring it to the same genus. The Beyrouk honey, the manna of the *tarfa*, and the gum of the *charad*, will probably be found to be nearly, if not altogether, identical. The *asheyr*, or *oshour*, a species of silk-tree which abounds in the Ghor, also yields a white juice of medicinal virtue. On making an incision into the thick branches, the juice exudes, which the Arabs collect by inserting a hollow reed, and sell to the druggists at Jerusalem: it is said to be a strong cathartic. The officinal manna, it is well known, comes from Calabria and Sicily, where it is

\* Travels in Syria, p. 392. Rauwolf has described a thorny plant, called *algul*, as yielding a species of manna, which he calls *arangubin*. Michaelis mentions another thorny plant, said to be called *alhage*. (Quest. xxvi.) These names will serve to guide the inquiries of future travellers.



obtained from a species of ash with a leaf resembling that of the acacia.\*

The notion, however, that any species of vegetable gum is the manna of the Scriptures, appears so totally irreconcilable with the Mosaic narrative, that, notwithstanding the learned names which may be cited in support of the conjecture,† it cannot be safely admitted as any explanation of the miracle. It is expressly said, that the manna was rained from heaven; that when the dew was exhaled, it appeared lying on the surface of the ground, — ‘a small, round thing, as small as the hoar-frost,’ — ‘like coriander seed, and its colour like a pearl;’ that it fell but six days in the week, and that a double quantity fell on the sixth day; that what was gathered on the first five days became offensive and bred worms if kept above one day, while that which was gathered on the sixth day kept sweet for two days; that the people had never seen it before, which could not possibly be the case with either wild-honey or gum-arabic; that it was a substance which admitted of being ground in a hand-mill or pounded in a mortar, of being made into cakes and baked, and that it tasted like wafers made with honey; lastly, that it continued falling for the forty years that the Israelites abode in the wilderness, but ceased on their arriving at the borders of Canaan.‡ To perpetuate the remembrance of the miracle, a pot of the manna was to be laid up by the side of the ark, which clearly indicates the extraordinary nature of the production. In no one respect does it correspond to the modern manna. The latter does not fall from heaven, it is not deposited with the dew, but exudes

\* The Calabrian manna is said to exude as the effect of the puncture of an insect, a species of grasshopper that sucks the plant; and Michaelis proposes it as a question for inquiry, whether the Arabian manna may be owing to an insect?

† Salmasius, Michaelis, and the Editor of Calmet.

‡ Exod. xvi; Num. 11; Deut. viii, 3, 16; Josh. v, 12.



from the trees when punctured, and is to be found only in the particular spots where those trees abound; it could not, therefore, have supplied the Israelites with food in the more arid parts of the desert, where they most required it. The gums, moreover, flow only for about a month in the year; they neither admit of being ground, pounded, or baked; they do not melt in the sun; they do not breed worms; and they are not peculiar to the Arabian wilderness. Others have supposed the manna to have been a fat and thick honey-dew, and that this was the wild honey which John the Baptist lived upon,—a supposition worthy of being ranked with the monkish legend of St John's bread, or the locust-tree,\* and equally showing an entire ignorance of the nature of the country. It requires the Israelites to have been constantly in the neighbourhood of trees, in the midst of a wilderness often bare of all vegetation. Whatever the manna was, it was clearly a substitute for bread, and it is expressly called meat, or food.† The abundant supply, the periodical suspension of it, and the peculiarity attaching to the sixth day's supply, it must at all events be admitted, were preternatural facts, and facts not less extraordinary than that the substance also should be of an unknown and peculiar description. The credibility of the sacred narrative cannot receive the slightest addition of evidence from any attempt to explain the miracle by natural causes. That narrative would lead any plain reader to expect that the manna should no longer be found to exist, having ceased to fall upwards of 3,000 years. As to the fact that the Arabs give that name to the juice of the *tarfa*, the value of their authority may be estimated by the pulpit of Moses and the footstep of Mohammed's camel. The cause of Revelation has

\* See Mod. Trav., Palestine, p. 173.

† Deut. viii, 3; Psalm lxxviii, 24; John vi, 31, 49, 58; and 1 Cor. x, 3.

less to fear from the assaults of open infidels, than from such ill-judged attempts of sceptical philosophers, to square the sacred narrative by their notions of probability. The giving of the manna was either a miracle or a fable. The proposed explanation makes it a mixture of both. It admits the fact of a Divine interposition, yet insinuates that Moses gives an incorrect or embellished account of it. It requires us to believe, that the Scripture history is at once true and a complete misrepresentation, and that the golden vase of manna was designed to perpetuate the simple fact, that the Israelites lived for forty years upon gum-arabic ! The miracle, as related by Moses, is surely more credible than the explanation.

We have already seen how little dependence can be placed on the local traditions. Burckhardt was much disappointed, he says, at being able to trace so very few of the ancient Hebrew names of the Old Testament in the modern names of the peninsula. 'It is evident that, with the exception of Sinai and a few others, they are all of Arabic derivation.' This latter remark, however, is a strange one, since the ancient Hebrew names and the ancient Arabic names would be nearly identical. But, in the names of *Djebel Mousa* and *Djebel Katerin*, so incongruously associated, we have a pretty strong proof that the modern Arabic appellations are not to be depended on. At the risk of unsettling the implicit geographical faith of centuries, and drawing down upon ourselves the anathemas of the whole brotherhood of Mount Sinai, we must intimate the doubt we entertain, whether the mountain of Moses be the Mount Sinai on which the law was given to Israel. Burckhardt has given a description of another still more elevated summit, which seems at least to put forth rival pretensions.

Mount Serbal, the mountain in question, belongs

to what is called the lower Sinai, which is separated from the upper range by *Wady Solaf* and *Wady Hebran*. On issuing from the narrow valley in which the convent stands, two roads may be taken to Sucz: that which we are about to describe, is the more southern of the two, and is supposed to be the one taken by Niebuhr. It lies for an hour and a half in a N. N. W. direction across the plain of *El Raha*, then crosses a summit of the same name, and descends to a spring called *Kanaytar*, near which are inscriptions. It then enters the *Wady Solaf* (the valley of wine), coming from the N. E., which is here the boundary of the upper mountains, and continues slightly to descend through sandy valleys, till, in a little less than ten hours, it issues into the great valley of the western Sinai, the *Wady el Sheikh*,\* which it descends in a direction N. W. by W. 'Upon several rocks of the mountains,' says Burckhardt, 'I saw small stone huts, which Hamed' (his guide) 'told me, were the works of infidels in ancient times: they were probably the cells of the hermits of Sinai. Upon the summits of three different mountains to the right, were small ruined towers, originally, perhaps, chapels, dependent on the episcopal see of Feiran. In descending the valley, the mountains on both sides approach so near, that a defile of only fifteen or twenty feet across is left. Beyond this they again diverge, when a range of the same hills of *tafal*, or yellow pipe-clay, are seen, which I observed in the higher parts of this wady.'

\* The Wady Faran of Niebuhr. 'Its length,' he says, 'is equal to a journey of a day and a half, extending from the foot of Mount Sinai to the Arabic Gulf. In the rainy season it is filled with water, and the inhabitants are then obliged to retire up the hills: it was dry when we passed through it. That part of it which we saw, was far from being fertile, but served as a pasture to goats, camels, and asses. The other part' (*i. e.* the Wady Feiran of Burckhardt) 'is said to be very fertile.'

After descending the valley for about an hour, the traveller enters the plantations of *Wady Feiran*, through a wood of tamarisks. This *wady*, which is a continuation of *Wady el Sheikh*, is considered as the finest valley in this part of the Arabian peninsula. From the upper extremity, an uninterrupted succession of gardens and date-plantations extends downwards for four miles, and almost every garden has a well, by means of which the grounds are irrigated the whole year round.\* Amid the date-trees are small huts, inhabited by the Tebna Arabs, (a branch of the Djebalye,) who are the gardeners of the Towara Bedoweens, the lords of the soil, taking one third of the fruit for their labour. The proprietors seldom visit the place, except in the date-harvest, when the valley is filled with people for a month or six weeks. 'At that season they erect huts of palm-branches, and pass their time in conviviality, receiving visits and treating their guests with dates;' — a custom strikingly similar to the Jewish festival of booths (tabernacles). The other productions of the valley are, the nebek (*rhamnus lotus*), the fruit of which is a favourite food of the Bedoweens, who grind the dried fruit, together with the stone, into a sort of meal called bsyse; tobacco, cucumbers, gourds, melons, hemp for smoking, onions, and a few *badend-jans* and carob-trees. The narrowness of the valley, which is not more than a hundred paces across, the high mountains on each side, and the thick woods of

\* 'Leaving the valley leading to Marah on the right hand, we entered a large vale between very rough mountains, commonly called Gebel Faran, our course then pointing towards the N. W. And passing through this vale by a tolerably easy descent, we found it adorned with trees and dates on both sides of us, here and there interspersed with the habitations of Arabs, and *full of birds* (Oct. 3), which entertained us very agreeably with their charming notes.' — *Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai*.

date-trees, render the heat extremely oppressive, and the unhealthiness of the situation is increased by the badness of the water. Dangerous fevers prevail here in the spring and summer, and the valley is almost deserted. At the point where it is joined by the *Wady Aleyat*, it widens, however, considerably, and is about a quarter of an hour in breadth. Here, Burckhardt says, upon the mountains on both sides of the road, stand the ruins of *an ancient city*.\*

‘ The houses are small, but built entirely of stone, some of which are hewn, and some united with cement, but the greater part are piled up loosely. I counted the ruins of about 200 houses. There are no traces of any large edifice on the north side; but, on the southern mountain, there is an extensive building, the lower part of which is of stone, and the upper part of earth. It is surrounded by private habitations, which are all in complete ruins. At the foot of the southern mountain are the remains of a small aqueduct. Upon several of the neighbouring hills are ruins of towers; and, as we proceeded down the valley for about three quarters of an hour, I saw many small grottoes in the rocks on both sides, hewn in the rudest manner, and without any regularity or sym-

\* ‘ We passed by a place on a mountain upon our right hand, called Kabegin, which was entirely destroyed, nothing remaining of it but the ruins. And, after a journey of another half-hour, we came to another ruined place called Faran, situated likewise on our right hand. This was formerly a large city, containing many convents of the Greeks; for it was an episcopal city, under the jurisdiction of Mount Sinai, and formerly had the famous Theodorus for its bishop, who wrote against the Monothelites. But at present nothing remains, except heaps of ruins of this ancient city. In this place, no one is suffered to put pen to paper, by reason of a tradition they have, that here was formerly a river, and that when a European was going to write down a description of it, out of indignation it sunk under ground, and has disappeared ever since.’ — *Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai*.



metry: the greater part seemed to have been originally formed by nature, and afterward widened by human labour. Some of the largest, which were near the ruined city, had, perhaps, once served as habitations: the others were evidently sepulchres; but few of them were large enough to hold three corpses, and they were not more than three or four feet high. I found no traces of antiquity in any of them. At half an hour from the last date-trees of Feiran, I saw, to the right of the wood, upon the side of the mountain, the ruins of a small town or village, the valley in the front of which is at present quite barren. It had been better built than the town above described, and contained one very good building of hewn stone with two stories, each having five oblong windows in front. The roof has fallen in. The style of architecture of the whole strongly resembles that seen in the ruins of St Simon to the north of Aleppo, the mountains above which are also full of sepulchral grottoes, like those near Feiran.\* The roofs of the houses appear to have been entirely of stone, like those in the ruined towns of the Haouran, but flat, and not arched. There were here about a hundred ruined houses.

‘Feiran was formerly the seat of a bishopric. Theodosius (Theodorus) was bishop during the monothelite controversy. From documents of the fifteenth century still existing in the convent of Mount Sinai, there appears at that time to have been an inhabited convent at Feiran. Makrizi, the excellent historian and describer of Egypt, who wrote about the same time, gives the following account of Feiran, which he calls Faran.† ‘It is one of the towns of the Amalekites, situated near the borders of the Sea of Kolzoum, upon a hill between two mountains, on each of which

\* See *Mod. Trav.*, Syria, vol. i, p. 310.

† It is so written by Niebuhr, and many of the Bedoweens pronounce it Fayran.

are numberless excavations full of corpses. It is one day's journey distant [in a straight line] from the Sea of Kolsoum, the shore of which is there called the shore of the sea of Faran; there it was that Pharaoh was drowned by the Almighty. Between the city of Faran and the Thy it is two days' journey. It is said that Faran is the name of the mountains of Mekka, and that it is the name of other mountains in the Hedjaz, and that it is the place mentioned in the books of Moses. But the truth is, that Tor and Faran are two districts belonging to the southern part of Egypt, and that it is not the same as the Faran (Paran) mentioned in the books of Moses. It is stated, that the mountains of Mekka derive their name from Faran Ibn Amr Ibn Amalyk. Some call them the mountains of Faran; others, Fyran. The city of Faran was one of the cities which belonged to Midian, and remained so to the present times. There are plenty of palm-trees there, of the dates of which I have myself eaten. A large river flows by. The town is at present in ruins. Only Bedouins pass there.' Makrizi is certainly right,' continues Burckhardt, 'in supposing that the Faran (or Paran) mentioned in the Scriptures is not the same as Feiran; an opinion which has been entertained by Niebuhr and other travellers. From the passage in Num. xiii, 26, it is evident that Paran was situated in the desert of Kadesh, which was on the borders of the country of the Edomites, and which the Israelites reached after their departure from Mount Sinai, on their road towards the land of Edom. Paran must therefore be looked for in the desert west of Wady Mousa, and the tomb of Aaron, which is shown there. At present, the people of Feiran bury their dead higher up in the valley than the ancient ruins. There is no rivulet, but, in winter time, the valley is completely flooded, and a large stream of water, collected from all the lateral valleys of Wady el Sheikh,

empties itself through Wady Feiran into the Gulf of Suez.\*

Having with some difficulty obtained a guide to the 'lower heights of Serbal,' Burckhardt now ascended the *Wady el Sheikh* for about three quarters of an hour, and then turned to the right up the narrow valley of *Wady Ertama*. After crossing a steep ascent at the further extremity, he fell in with *Wady Rymm*, where are ruins of a small village, the houses of which have been built of hewn stone in a very solid manner, and some remains of the foundations of a large edifice are traceable: a little lower down is a well surrounded with date-trees; but the whole country round is a rocky and barren wilderness. Early the next day, having filled his water-skins at *Ain Rymm*, our adventurous Traveller, with his companion Hamed and another Arab, began to ascend the mountain straight before him. We 'walked,' he says, 'over sharp rocks without any path, till we came to the almost perpendicular sides of the upper Serbal, which we ascended in a narrow, difficult cleft. The day grew excessively hot; not a breath of wind was stirring; and it took us four hours to climb up to the lower summit of the mountain, where I arrived completely exhausted. Here is a small plain with some trees, and the ruins of a small stone reservoir. On several blocks of granite are inscriptions, but most of them are illegible. After reposing a little, I ascended the eastern peak, which was to our left hand, and reached its top in three quarters of an hour, after great exertions; for the rock is so smooth and slippery, as well as steep, that, even barefooted as I was, I was obliged frequently to crawl upon my belly to avoid being precipitated below; and had I not casually met with a few shrubs to grasp, I should probably have been obliged to abandon my attempt,

\* Travels in Syria, pp. 616—618.

or have rolled down the eliff. The summit of the eastern peak consists of one enormous mass of granite, the smoothness of which is broken only by a few partial fissures, presenting an appearance not unlike the ice-covered peaks of the Alps. The sides of the peak, at a few paces below its top, are formed of large insulated blocks, twenty or thirty feet long, which appear as if just suspended, in the act of rushing down the steep. Near the top, I found steps regularly formed with large loose stones, which must have been brought from below, and so judiciously arranged along the declivity, that they have resisted the devastations of time, and may still serve for ascending. I was afterwards told, that these steps are the continuation of a regular path from the bottom of the mountain, which is in several parts cut through the rock with great labour. If we had had a guide, we should have ascended by this road, which turns along the southern and eastern side of Serbal. The mountain has in all five peaks: the two highest are, that to the east, which I ascended, and another immediately west of it. These rise like cones, and are distinguishable from a great distance, particularly on the road to Cairo.

‘The eastern peak, which, from below, looks as sharp as a needle, has a platform on its summit of about fifty paces in circumference. Here is a heap of small loose stones, about two feet high, forming a circle about twelve paces in diameter. Just below the top, I found, on every granite block that presented a smooth surface, inscriptions, the far greater part of which are legible. I copied three from different blocks:\* the characters of the first are a foot long. There are small caverns large enough to shelter a

\* These and some others are given in the printed volume. They are written from right to left, and closely resemble the inscriptions copied by Niebuhr.

few persons, between some of the masses of stone. On the sides of these caverns are numerous inscriptions similar to those on the blocks. The fact of so many inscriptions being found upon the rocks near the summit of this mountain, and also in the valley which leads from its foot to F<sup>o</sup>tan, together with the existence of the road leading up to the peak, affords strong reasons for presuming that the Serbal was an ancient place of devotion. It will be recollected that *no inscriptions are found either on the mountain of Moses or on Mount St Catherine*; and that those which are found in the Ledja valley at the foot of *Djebel Katerin*, are not to be traced above the rock from which the water is said to have issued, and appear only to be the work of pilgrims. From these circumstances, *I am persuaded that Mount Serbal was at one period the chief place of pilgrimage in the peninsula, and that it was then considered as the mountain where Moses received the tables of the Law*; though I am equally convinced, from a perusal of the Scriptures, that the Israelites encamped in the Upper Sinai, and that either *Djebel Mousa* or Mount St Catherine is the real Horeb. It is not at all impossible, that the proximity of Serbal to Egypt may at one period have caused that mountain to be the Horeb of the pilgrims, and that the establishment of the convent in its present situation, which was probably chosen from motives of security, may have led to the transferring of that honour to *Djebel Mousa*. At present, neither the monks of Mount Sinai nor those of Cairo consider Mount Serbal as the scene of any of the events of sacred history; nor have the Bedouins any tradition respecting it; but it is possible, that if the Byzantine writers were thoroughly examined, some mention might be found of this mountain, which I believe was never before visited by any European traveller.

‘The direction of *Deir Sigillye* (qu. Cecilia?) was



pointed out to me, — a ruined convent on the S. E. side of Serbal, near the road which leads up to the summit. It is said to be well built and spacious, and there is a copious well near it. It is four or five hours distant, by the shortest road, from Feiran, and lies in a very rocky district, at present uninhabited even by Bedouins.\*

‘I found great difficulty in descending. If I had had a plentiful supply of water, and either of us had known the road, we should have gone down by the steps; but our water was nearly exhausted, and in this hot season, even the hardy Bedouin is afraid to trust to the chance only of finding a path or a spring. I was therefore obliged to return by the same way which I had ascended; and by crawling, rather than walking, we reached the lower platform of Serbal just about noon, and reposed under the shade of a rock. I was afterwards informed, that in a cleft of the rock, not far from the stone tank, there is a small source which never dries up. We had yet a long journey to make. Hamed, therefore, volunteered to set out before me to fill the skin in the valley below, and to meet me with it at the foot of the cleft by which we had entered the mountain. He departed, leaping down the mountain like a gazelle, and, after prolonging my *siesta*, I leisurely followed him with the other Arab. When we arrived, at the end of two hours and a half, at the point agreed upon, we found Hamed waiting for us with the water, which he had brought from a well, at least five miles distant. Instead of pursuing, from our second halting-place, the road by which we had ascended in the morning from *Ain Rymn*, we took a more western direction to the left

\* From the peak, Burckhardt took several bearings : Wady Feiran, N. W. by N. ; Wady el Sheikh, where it appears broadest, E. N. E. ; Nakb el Raha, E. S. E. ; Mount St Catherine, S. E. by E. ; Om Shomar, S. S. E.

of the former, and reached by a less rapid descent the *Wady Aleyat*, which leads to the lower parts of *Wady Feiran*. After a descent of an hour, we came to a less rocky country. At the end of an hour and a half, we reached the well, situated among date-plantations where he had filled the skins: its water is very good, much better than that of Feiran. This valley is inhabited by Bedouins during the date-harvest; and here are many huts, built of stones or of date-branches, which they then occupy. In the evening, we continued our route in the valley Aleyat, in the direction N. W. To our right was a mountain, upon the top of which is the tomb of a sheikh, held in great veneration by the Bedouins, who frequently visit it, and there sacrifice sheep. It is called *El Monadja*. The custom among the Bedouins of burying their saints upon the summits of mountains, accords with a similar practice of the Israelites. There are very few Bedouin tribes who have not one or more tombs of protecting saints (*makam*), in whose honour they offer sacrifices: the custom probably originated in their ancient idolatrous worship, and was in some measure retained by the sacrifices enjoined by Mohammed in the great festivals of the Islam. In many parts of this valley stand small buildings, ten or twelve feet square and five feet high, with very narrow entrances. They are built with loose stones, but so well put together, that the greater part are yet entire, notwithstanding the annual rains. They are all quite empty. I at first supposed them to be magazines belonging to the Arabs, but my guides told me, that their countrymen never entered them, because they were *kobour el kofar*, tombs of infidels, — perhaps of the early Christians of the peninsula. I did not, however, meet with any similar structures in other parts, unless those in the upper part of *Wady Feiran* are of the same class. In the course of my descent from the

foot of Mount Serbal through *Wady Aleyat*, I found numerous inscriptions on blocks by the side of the road. On many stones were drawings of goats and camels. This was once, probably, the main road to the top of Serbal, which continued along its foot, and turned by *Deir Sigillye* round its eastern side; thus passing the cleft and the road by which we ascended, and which no where bears traces of having ever been a regular and frequented route.\*

There can be little doubt that these inscriptions,

\* At sunset, Burckhardt reached *Wady Feiran*. The next day but one, he pursued his journey to Suez. The valley winds W. N. W. and N. W. 'At two hours, for the length of about an hour, it bears the name of *Wady el Beka* (the valley of weeping).' At three hours and a half, the route passes *Wady Romman*, soon after which the granite formation is succeeded by sandstone. At six hours and a half, it enters *Wady Mokatteb*, which extends for three hours in a N. W. direction. The sandstone cliffs are thickly covered with inscriptions, which are continued, with intervals of a few hundred paces only, for at least two hours and a half. Similar inscriptions are found in the lower part of the valley. They all consist of short lines, written from right to left, and with the same singular character (  $\text{V}$  ) invariably at the beginning of each. Some of them are at a height of twelve or fifteen feet. Among them are many in Greek, containing, probably, Burckhardt conjectures, the names of pilgrims. Some of the latter, he says, contain Jewish names in Greek characters. There is also a vast number of drawings of mountain-goats and camels, the latter sometimes loaded, or with riders. Crosses are also seen in these inscriptions. The Mokatteb is a much easier and more frequented route than the upper road by Naszeb, and the cliffs are so situated as to afford a fine shade at mid-day. This was the route taken by Niebuhr. Burckhardt halted at the end of nine hours and a quarter, near the lower extremity of the valley, there called *Seyh Szeder*. The next day, he went six hours, to Morkha, and thence followed the shore for three quarters of an hour, to *Birket Faraoun*. The third day, after a march of eleven hours, he reached Gharendel; the fourth day, he halted in the lower part of *Wady Szeder*; and on the fifth, reached Suez.

tombs, and ruins are of a date anterior to the convent of St Catherine; and Burckhardt's opinion has the highest degree of probability in its favour, that Mount Serbal was the original Mount Sinai of pilgrims. The monastery of St Catherine, we have seen, was founded no further back than the beginning of the sixth century, in the reign of Justinian, by Greek monks. The names of *Djebel Mousa*, Mount Sinai, Mount Horeb, &c, indiscriminately applied to this mountain, cannot, as local designations, be traced further back. Mount Sinai is two or three times mentioned in the Koran, in connexion with a ridiculous legend;\* but, in neither instance is there any reference to its geographical situation. The name of Sinai is of doubtful etymology. The words *senah* and *sinan*, from which it is supposed to be derived, signify a bush, coldness, and the dwarf palm. The manner in which Horeb and Sinai are used as convertible terms in the sacred writings, has led to the supposition that they must be twin summits of the same mountain; and this idea probably led to the fixing upon *Djebel Mousa* and *Djebel Katerin* as Sinai and Horeb. For this opinion, however, there is no solid foundation. Horeb and Sinai were in some sense the same; but it may be questioned whether Horeb was the proper name of any summit: it was rather the name of the region, *i. e.* the desert country.† Whereas Sinai is

\* 'Call to mind also when we accepted your covenant, and lifted up the mountain of Sinai over you.' — SALE'S *Koran*, chap. ii. The Mohammedan tradition is, that the Israelites refusing to receive the law of Moses, God tore up the mountain by the roots, and shook it over their heads, to terrify them into compliance. In chap. xcv, entitled 'The Fig,' Mount Sinai is associated with the sacred territory of Mekka, 'the fig' (supposed to denote a mountain near Damascus,) and 'the olive' (M. Olivet).

† 'The Lord made a covenant with us in Horeb.' Deut. v, 2. 'They made a calf in Horeb.' Psalm cvi, 19. 'The rock in Horeb.' Exod. xvii, 6. See also Exod. iii, 1, where

always spoken of as the mount;\* and it probably derived its name from the vegetation which covered it, — perhaps from the bush or thorny plant (acacia?) out of the midst of which the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a meteoric flame. The language of Scripture would lead us to suppose that Sinai was a detached mountain in the midst of a plain, and that Israel encamped around it. The double summit of the modern Sinai, formed by Mount Moses and Mount Catherine, makes against its identity. The wilderness of Mount Sinai was at some distance from the barren plain of Rephidim, in which Joshua obtained a victory over the Amalekites; yet, the rock was ‘in Horeb,’ from which, on being struck by the rod of Moses, in the sight of the elders who accompanied him thither, a stream gushed out sufficiently copious to supply the camp in Rephidim.† Horeb, therefore, was a rocky district which either bordered on both Rephidim and Sinai, or comprehended the latter; and it certainly included the plain in which the Israelites remained while Moses ascended Mount Sinai, for it was ‘in Horeb’ that they provoked the Almighty by the worship of the calf.‡ That which is specifically called the wilderness of Mount Sinai, must have been lower ground than the plain of Rephidim, if, as is generally supposed, the stream took its course in that direction, and ‘followed them’§ so as to afford a supply of water during the twelve months that they remained encamped in that

‘the mount of God’ may be rendered ‘the great mountain (of Horeb);’ and 1 Kings xix, 8, where Horeb apparently denotes the country, and the mount of God, or the great mountain, the particular spot.

\* Exod. xviii, 20; Acts vii, 30, 38; Gal. iv, 25. Josephus calls it *Σιναιον ορος*.

† Compare Exod. xvii, with xix, 1, 2, and Psalm lxxxiii, 20.

‡ Deut. ix, 8; Psalm cvi, 19.

§ 1 Cor. x, 4; Deut. ix, 21.



district. The brook itself, perhaps, we can scarcely be warranted to look for as still in existence; and yet, it is more likely to remain as a monument of the Divine power, than either the manna or the palm-trees of Elim, as it evidently proceeded from a spring miraculously produced, and was not a mere torrent, but began to flow in the dry season, about the beginning of May. The immediate vicinity of Sinai afforded pasturage;\* it would otherwise have been impossible for the Israelites to have remained so long in that place; and its name suggests that it abounded with some species of acacia. Josephus describes Sinai as an extremely pleasant place, and the Israelites appear to have lived here much at their ease. This ill corresponds to the neighbourhood of *Djebel Mousa*.†

\* Exod. xxxiv, 3.

† The side of *Djebel Katerin*, however, affords excellent pasturage. Dr Shaw terms Sinai 'a beautiful plain, more than a league in breadth, and nearly three in length,' closed to the southward by some of the lower eminences of Sinai. 'In this direction, likewise,' he adds, 'the higher parts of it make such encroachments upon the plain, that they divide it into two, each of them capacious enough to receive the whole encampment of the Israelites. That which lieth to the eastward of the mount may be the desert of Sinai, properly so called.' The other he supposes to be Rephidim. Compare with this Niebuhr's description, and it is hard to suppose the same place is referred to. 'It will appear, then, that the mountain which the Greeks call Sinai, is not in a great plain, as many people may have supposed. It does not follow, however, that the Sinai of the Greeks is not the true Sinai, for even our Arabs gave the name of *Djabbel Mousa* (the mountains of Moses) to the whole of the chain of mountains from the valley of Faran, and that of *Tour Sina* to the part on which the monastery is built. Moreover, some learned Europeans who have had an opportunity of examining this country with much exactness, are of opinion, that it is on this mountain that Moses received the law. Thus, although on that side, and close to Mount Sinai properly so called, there would not have been room for a camp so numerous as that of the Israelites, there

Further, one would expect that the real Mount Sinai would be found to exhibit some traces of the stupendous phenomena which attended the manifestation of the Divine presence in the visible symbols of fire, and earthquake, and seemingly volcanic eruption. In no part, however, of the Upper Sinai could Burckhardt detect the slightest traces of a volcano or of any volcanic production. We do not, indeed, read of any actual discharge from the mountain; but, as it is expressly said to have 'burned with fire,' to have emitted smoke 'like a furnace,' and to have 'quaked greatly,' some marks of the convulsion and of the action of fire might yet be looked for on the site of this wonderful transaction.

It does not appear that Mount Serbal, any more than the supposititious Sinai, exhibits any appearances of this kind; and its five peaks, according to the view now taken of the subject, militate against the idea that it is the Horeb of Scripture. That it was first selected as the representative of Sinai, was owing, probably, to its great elevation. Burckhardt had no means of taking measurement of the different elevations, but it appeared to him higher than all the peaks, including Mount St Catherine.\* It is alto-

are, perhaps, larger plains on the other side, or they may have encamped round *Djabbel Mousa*, and so partly even in the valley of Faran.' He states the convent of St Catherine to be two German miles and a half up the mountain, and says: 'It is not easy to comprehend how such a multitude as accompanied Moses out of Egypt, could encamp in those narrow gulleys, amid frightful and precipitous rocks; but perhaps there are plains that we know not of on the other side of the mountains.' — *Yoyage en Arabie*, tom. i, p. 200. PINKERTON's *Voy. and Trav.* vol. x, p. 10.

\* Travels, p. 608. It is added, 'and very little lower than *Djebel Mousa*.' But this must be an error, since Mount St Catherine is higher than the mountain of Moses, and Burckhardt elsewhere (p. 596) speaks of Mount Serbal, Mount St Catherine, and Mount Shomar, as the three highest peaks in

gether a gratuitous hypothesis, however, that Sinai was a pre-eminently high mountain. The authority on which Mount Serbal appears once to have been designated as the mount of God, though somewhat earlier, is not more to be depended upon than that of the monks in Justinian's time. The latter were Greeks; the monks of Serbal and Feiran were, perhaps, Syrian or Egyptian Christians of the fourth or fifth century. It is not impossible, indeed, that Mount Serbal may have been consecrated and made into a Sinai subsequently to the era of Justinian; that it was a rival establishment; or, that it was frequented at the time that access to *Djebel Mousa* was impracticable. But the absence of inscriptions on the latter mountain is a suspicious circumstance, and makes strongly against its prior claim. After all, Mount St Catherine *may be* the real Sinai: there is every reason to believe that *Djebel Mousa* is not. The design of these remarks has been, to assist future travellers in investigating these several localities afresh, and for themselves. Let them dismiss from their minds alike the legends of monks and the conflicting hypotheses of learned writers, taking the Scripture narrative as their best clue, and we may then hope to have at least some further light thrown upon this interesting geographical problem.\*

the peninsula. Mr Fazakerley, from the top of *Djebel Katerin*, saw Sinai far below him. Yet, in Calmet's Dictionary, Sinai is said to be at least one-third part higher than 'Horeb,' and its ascent 'more upright and difficult.' On its summit, it is added, 'is built a little chapel called St Catherine's, where it is thought the body of this saint rested for 360 years, until it was removed into a church at the foot of the mountains.' This shows that *Djebel Katerin* is meant, and looks as if that mountain was formerly taken for Sinai.

\* Supposing Elim to be at *El Waadi*, near 'Tor, the stations of the Israelites will require to be ascertained between that place and Sinai; and four hours, or about fifteen miles, will probably be as great a distance as can be assigned to a

Mention has been made, in the preceding paragraph, of the mountain called *Om Shomar*, as one of the

day's journey. From Elim, the children of Israel journeyed to the coast of the Red Sea, taking, probably, a southerly course, and encamped there. They then left the coast, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin, which is stated to be between Elim and Sinai, and which may possibly be *El Kaa*. On leaving the wilderness of Sin, they first encamped at Dophkah (in the Septuag. vers. Raphaka); next at Alush; and thence removed to Rephidim, 'where was no water for the people to drink.' On departing from Rephidim, they pitched in the wilderness of Sinai. Two circumstances would influence their line of march; — the necessity of finding water and pasture for the herds, and the character of the inhabitants of the territory. It was at Rephidim that they first encountered the opposition of a powerful tribe; but it does not appear that they had hitherto invaded the territory of Amalek. The same caution is observed by the Bedoweens still. We learn, moreover, from Burckhardt, that pilgrims who have been cut off from the caravan, and who are ignorant of the road across the desert to Cairo, '*sometimes make the tour of the whole peninsula by the sea-side*, as they are thus sure not to lose their way, and in winter time seldom fail to find pools of water.' (*Travels in Syria*, p. 504.) Is not this likely to have been the very course adopted by Moses? Yet, all our travellers have first taken the situation of Sinai for granted, and then looked out for the shortest route as the course of the Israelites.

The situation of Elim, however, has not yet been satisfactorily verified. Mr Fazakerley, describing the spot alluded to under the name of *El Waadi*, mentions two suspicious circumstances: first, there is an *hospitium* near the spot, belonging to the convent of Mount Sinai, — a bad omen; and secondly, the springs, he says, are of *hot salt water*! The Arabs told him that the waters had been *turned salt*, as the punishment incurred by an insult offered here to Moses. It appears, indeed, that they are not all hot. Dr Shaw says: 'The water of *Hamman Mousa*, among the wells of Elim, is moderately warm and sulphureous: but that of the wells is brackish, and of a crude digestion, creating those scrophulous tumours, that sallowness of complexion, and those obstructions in the bowels, which are too much complained of by the inhabitants of Tor who drink them.' (*Travels*, p. 380.) Can this be Elim?



highest mountains in the peninsula. Burckhardt had been informed by both the Bedowecns and the monks,

If *Djebel Katerin* be Mount Sinai, it will deserve consideration, whether the wilderness or plain of Sinai may not be the broad valley into which the *Ledja* opens? Can *Wady Rahaba* be Rephidim? Burckhardt mentions a secondary mountain, called *Senned*, between the Upper Sinai and Hadhra, bordering upon *Wady Sal*. The apparent approach of this name to Sinai, may deserve attention.

Lord Valentia has started an opinion which deserves some attention, respecting the route of the Israelites to the Red Sea. He supposes the province of Goshen or Ramesses, from which they set out, to have been situated in the isthmus of Suez, and Heroopolis, which was on the direct road from On or Heliopolis to Canaan, to have been in Goshen. Ptolemy places it on the confines of Arabia, and states that the canal of Trajan ran through it. 'The course of that canal has been traced by the French engineers from long.  $31^{\circ} 52'$  to  $32^{\circ} 20'$ , running nearly east and west in about N. lat.  $30^{\circ} 32'$ ; it is, therefore, within this line only,' remarks the noble Traveller, 'that we can look for it; and I am inclined to admit the opinion of M. Aymé as well founded, that the ruins he discovered at Abou-kechied, indicate the spot where Heroopolis stood, and where, consequently, the children of Israel resided....The French engineers discovered, when in possession of Suez, that at a little distance to the north of that place are marshes which extend for about twenty-five miles, and which are actually lower than the sea, though they are not overflowed, in consequence of a large bar of sand which has been accumulated between them; nothing, therefore, can be more probable, than that, in times so far back, the sea extended to these marshes.' This being once admitted to be the situation of Ramesses, it will appear improbable that the Israelites, in attempting to escape from Egypt, should turn southward, to the very banks of the holy river, round *Djebel Mokattem*, and so enter the valley which extends thence to the Red Sea. In Exod. xiii, 17, it is declared that 'God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.' Now, adds his lordship, 'both these observations are perfectly true, if they set off from the vicinity of Heroopolis, which was actually on the way to Canaan, but would be false, if they began their journey from opposite Memphis, whence it would



that a thundering noise, like repeated discharges of heavy artillery, is heard at times in the mountains in that direction; and the *ikonomos* of the convent told him, that he remembered to have heard the noise at four or five separate periods. Anxious to ascertain the truth of this report, he resolved to visit the mountain itself. The route led him along *Wady Sebaye*, till, at the end of an hour and a half from the convent, he turned to the right from the road to Sherm, and entered *Wady Owasz* in a direction S. by W., where a small chain of white and red sand-

be much nearer to reach the Red Sea than the land of the Philistines. By the supposition that the children of Israel resided nearer to the desert, we get rid of the difficulty of their having to march sixty miles in only three stages, which is the distance from the Nile to the Red Sea, and which seems almost impossible, encumbered as they were with children, cattle, baggage, and kneading-troughs; even supposing that their three marches were in a direct line east, which appears to have been by no means the case; for they were directed, after the second day's march, when they quitted Etham on the edge of the wilderness, to turn and encamp before Piha-heroth between Migdol and the sea.' The noble Traveller inclines, therefore, to Niebuhr's opinion, that *Djebel Attakah* was 'the southern boundary of their journey.'

Dr Shaw admits, that the distance from the neighbourhood of Cairo to the valley of Baideah, by the road which he supposes the Israelites to have taken, would be too great to be accomplished by the Israelites in three days, being not less than 30 hours, or 90 Roman miles. But he gets over the difficulty, by supposing that Josephus and those who have followed him, have been 'too hasty in making the Israelites perform this journey in three days, by reckoning, as they do, a station for a day.' Certainly there is no more reason to suppose that Succoth and Etham were but a day's journey apart, than that Elim was only that distance from Marah. If Dr Shaw's supposition be inadmissible in the one case, then *El Waadi* cannot be Elim. If Lord Valentia's conjecture be adopted, the Israelites must be supposed to have crossed the Red Sea above Suez, and the wilderness of Etham (Num. xxxiv, 8) may possibly be the *El Ahtha* of Burckhardt. See p. 114.

stone hills rises in the midst of the granite formation. At four hours and a half, after crossing several hills, he reached *Wady Rahaba*, one of the principal valleys on this side of the peninsula, and affording good pasturage. Here he halted under a granite rock in the middle of the valley, close by about a dozen small buildings, called by the Bedowecns *makhseen* (magazines), where they deposite provisions, clothes, money, and other articles which they do not require in their continual migrations. Almost every Bedoween in easy circumstances, we are told, has one of these magazines, which may be met with in clusters of ten or twenty in different parts of the mountains. 'They are at most ten feet high, generally about ten or twelve feet square, constructed with loose stones, covered with the trunks of date-trees, and closed with a wooden door and lock. These buildings are altogether so slight, and the doors so insecure, that a stone would be sufficient to break them open. No watchmen are left to guard them, and they are in such solitary spots that they might easily be plundered in the night, without the thief being ever discovered. But such is the good faith of the Towara towards each other, that robberies of this kind are almost unheard of; and the Sheikh Szaleh, whose magazine is well known to contain fine dresses, shawls, and dollars, considers his property as safe there as it would be in the best secured building in a large town. The Towara are well entitled to pride themselves on this trait in their character; for I found nothing similar to it among other Bedouins.\*'

Continuing his route along a side branch of the

\* Burckhardt was shown a rock in Wady Shebeyke, from which, some years before, a Towara Bedoween had precipitated his son, bound hands and feet, 'because he had stolen corn out of a magazine belonging to a friend of the family.'

Rahaba, he ascended, at the end of five hours and a half, a rocky mountain; and soon after, the narrow passes became too rocky for the camel to traverse. Leaving it in the charge of one of his Arab guides, our Traveller now proceeded on foot. The winding defile of *Wady Zereigye* is thickly overgrown with fennel three or four feet high, the stalks of which are eaten by the Bedoween, who believe that it cools the blood. In one part, he came to two copious springs, most picturesquely situated under the shade of large wild fig-trees, which abound in other parts of this district. At the end of eight hours, he arrived at the lower extremity of the *wady*, where it joins the narrow valley which extends along the foot of *Om Shomar*. The almost perpendicular cliffs of that mountain now rose before him, and the aspect of the country assumed a savage wildness. 'The devastations of torrents are every where visible, the sides of the mountains being rent by them in numberless directions. The surface of the sharp rocks is blackened by the sun; all vegetation is dry and withered; and the whole scene presents nothing but utter desolation and hopeless barrenness.' He ascended the valley towards the S.E., winding for about an hour round the foot of the mountain, till he reached the well of *Romhan*, distant nine hours from the convent. Here there is a fine spring, with several date-trees and a gigantic fig-tree; high grass grows in the narrow pass near it; and on the side of the mountain, just above the well, is a ruined convent called *Deir Antous* (St Anthony?). It was inhabited in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, according to the monks, was the last convent abandoned by them. Burekhardt found it mentioned in records of the fifteenth century, in the library of the great convent. 'It was then one of the principal settlements, and caravans of asses, laden with corn and other provisions, passed by this place regularly

from the convent to Tor; for this is the nearest road to that harbour, though it is more difficult than the more western route, which is now usually followed. The convent consisted of a small, solid building, constructed with blocks of granite. I was told, that date-plantations are found higher up in the valley of Romhan, and that the monks formerly had their gardens there, of which some of the fruit-trees still remain.\*

Our Traveller rested at the well for the night, and early the next morning ascended the mountain. It took him an hour and a half to reach the first summit of Shomar, and he employed three hours in visiting, separately, all the surrounding heights. *Om Shomar* consists chiefly of granite; the lower stratum is red, but, towards the top, the large proportion of white feldspath, and the smallness of the particles of hornblende and mica, give it, he says, at a distance, the appearance of chalk. In the middle of the mountain, between the granite rocks, are broad strata of brittle, black slate, mixed with layers of quartz and feldspath, and with micaceous schistus. The quartz includes thin strata of mica of the most brilliant white, which is quite dazzling in the sunshine, and strikingly contrasts with the blackened surface of the slate and red granite. The highest peak of *Om Shomar* is apparently inaccessible: it rises to a point, and the sides are almost perpendicular, as well as so smooth as to afford no foot-hold. Burekhardt halted at about 200 feet below, where a beautiful view presented itself, opening upon the Gulf of Suez. Tor was distinctly visible, and the wide plain of *El Kaa* was seen extending itself immediately beneath, to the low chain of *Hemam*, which separates it from the sea.\* The southern side of the mountain is very

\* In this low chain, is the *Djebel Narkous*, or mountain of the bell, referred to at page 127, which Burekhardt states, upon



abrupt; and in this direction there is no secondary chain in the descent from Sinai to the coast. Burck-

hearsay, to be about five hours northward of Tor. It is, according to Mr Fazakerley, just half that distance. The latter Traveller's account of the phenomenon so singularly differs from Sir F. Henniker's story, that it is hard to suppose they both describe the same place. 'About an hour and a half from *El Waadi*,' (distant a mile from Tor,) 'keeping along the shore of the sea, we came to the foot of a high precipice, and a bank of fine white sand, which went in a rapid slope nearly to the top of it. It is pretended here, as at the ancient Memnon, that the noises are heard only when the sun is at a particular height; and the hour at which we got there, was fortunately favourable for the experiment. Elias crossed himself devoutly, looked a little frightened, and then scrambled up the bank. When he was about half the way up, he stopped, and began to slide down again: during which we distinctly heard a sound, *sometimes like one piece of metal struck against another*; sometimes the sound was more continued, and reminded us of the *musical glasses*. We then went up ourselves, and, as we were sliding down, the same sound was produced, louder or softer, as we pressed more or less against the sand. We felt too, very sensibly, a sort of quivering or vibration, proceeding, as it seemed, from something immediately under the surface of the sand, and this feeling always accompanied the sound. The sand on the surface is light and dry, and, digging as deep as I could with my hands and a dagger, I found only a bed of moister sand. Whether there is any cavity below, or from what causes the phenomenon may arise, I cannot pretend to guess; but I have attempted to set down correctly what we heard and felt. The Greeks and Arabs agree in calling it miraculous, and never expect to hear the sound until St Catherine or Mahomet has been invoked. They have, of course, a crowd of legends about saints, and departed priests, and demons, and good and evil genii, who celebrate their respective mysteries under this incomprehensible bank of sand.' (WALPOLE'S *Collect. of Travels in the East*, p. 382.) Here is no gap, no rumbling thunder, as in Sir F. Henniker's account: and, on the other hand, he heard no metallic sound such as is here described, and which has evidently given its name to the mountain. Burckhardt says, the Bedowens believe that the bells belong to a convent buried under the sands. The sound is, doubtless, produced by the falling of



hardt was unable to discover the slightest marks of volcanic action, to which he supposed the thundering noise might be attributable; nor did he observe any thing which could throw light on the alleged phenomenon. The direction from which a sound may seem to come is, however, a very uncertain guide; and the assertions of the Bedoweens on this subject must have some foundation. Volcanic rocks are found near Sherm.

Another excursion made by this enterprising Traveller, was from the Great Convent eastward to the Gulf of Akaba; a track previously unexplored by any modern traveller, and of which, in as compressed a form as possible, we shall give the topographical details.

Mr Burckhardt left the convent early on the 4th of May (1816), but proceeded the first day only as far as the well of *Abou Szoueyr*, situated in a narrow inlet in the eastern chain, which leads into the *Wady el Sheikh*. From this place, he ascended a hilly country for half an hour, and then, after a short descent, 'which terminates the district of Sinai on this side,' entered on a wide, open plain with low hills, called *Szoueyry*; direction N.E. by E. In an hour and a half, he entered a narrow and extremely barren valley, running between the lower ridges of the primitive mountains, called *Wady Sal*. He continued to pursue the windings of this valley E. by N. and E.N. E., descending slightly, till, at the end of seven hours, he issued from it into a small plain, which he crossed in half an hour. He then entered another similar valley, where the descent was very rapid, which, in nine hours and a half,

the sand; but what it meets with in the cavity, it must be left for some future Belzoni to reveal. It were almost a pity, however, to spoil the legend.

led into a broader valley running southward, having for its soil a deep sand. In *Wady Sal*, the granite rocks had given place to porphyry, grüinstein, and slate; in the lower valley, a gray, small-grained granite had reappeared; but now the sandstone formation begins. After a march of eleven hours, he alighted in the plain of *Haydar*, which appears to form the northern sandy boundary of the Lower Sinai chain. About six or eight miles to the left, runs a long and straight chain of mountains, supposed to be the continuation of *El Tyh*. Over this plain leads the direct road from the convent to Akaba, and thence to Hebron and Jerusalem. That which Burckhardt took, descends to the sea.

The route of the next day lay N.E. by N. over the gravelly plain, having an open country with low hills to the east, till, at one hour and a half, it descended a valley of deep sand contracting into a narrow defile. Mount St Catherine here bore S.W. by W. The pass issued in a rough, rocky plain intersected by beds of torrents. About two miles up a side valley is the well *Hadhra*, which, Burckhardt suggests, may be Hazeroth. The main direction was now E. N. E., till, at the end of four hours and three quarters, the winding defiles issued in the fine valley of *Wady Rahab*. Here there are many syale-trees, and the sands terminate. In three quarters of an hour more, our Traveller entered another valley, slightly descending through a sandstone formation alternating with granite. The barrenness of this district exceeded any thing he had yet witnessed, except some parts of the desert of *El Tyh*. 'The Nubian valleys might be called pleasure-grounds in comparison. Not the smallest green leaf could be discovered, and the thorny mimosa, which retains its verdure in the tropical deserts of Nubia with very little supply of moisture, was here entirely withered, and so dry that it caught fire

from the lighted ashes which fell from our pipes as we passed.' At six hours and a half, he entered *Wady Samghy*, coming from the S., and running N.E. At eight hours and a half, he turned eastward into a side valley called *Boszeyra*, where, a quarter of an hour further, he halted for the night.

The next day's route first crossed a short mountain ridge, and then descended the steep bed of a torrent called *Saada*, in an easterly direction, which, in an hour and a half, assumed the character of a majestic but very narrow pass, between high perpendicular grüstein rocks. In some places, the passage is only ten feet across. After proceeding for about a mile in this striking defile, our Traveller caught the first glimpse of the Gulf of Akaba. The valley now widens as it descends to the sea, and after two hours and a quarter, he alighted on a sandy beach, several hundred paces in breadth, near a well of brackish but drinkable water, and some groves of date-trees: the place is called *El Noweyba*. The valley opens directly upon the sea, into which, in the rainy season, it empties its torrent. The grüstein and granite rocks reach all the way down; but, at the very foot of the mountain, a thin layer of chalk appears just above the surface. Following the coast in a N. N. E. direction, our Traveller halted, at the end of three hours and a quarter, at a spring of tolerable water and a grove of date-trees, intermixed with a few tamarisks, close by the sea: the place is called *Wasta*. Beyond this, the route skirted a small bay, where the sands bore the impression of the tracks of serpents crossing each other in many directions; and Burckhardt was told, that serpents are very common in these parts. The fishermen are much afraid of them, and extinguish their fires before they go to sleep, because the light is known to

attract them.\* At a distance were seen several gazelles, which are said to descend at mid-day to the sea to bathe. At one hour from Wasta, is another well with a grove of palm-trees, but the well was completely choked up by the sands. Every tree in these plantations has its acknowledged owner among some of the Towara tribes; but not the smallest attention is paid to them till the period of the date-harvest, when the owners encamp under them with their families for about a week while the fruit is gathered. The shrub *gharkad* was found growing here in large quantities. At three hours and three quarters, after skirting two more small bays, round which the rocks leave but a narrow path, our Traveller passed an opening in the mountain formed by *Wady Om Hash*, and, in another half hour, *Wady Mowaleh*. At the end of five hours and three quarters, he rested on the south side of the chalky promontory called *Abou Burko*, (*i. e.* he who wears a face-veil, from a white rock resembling the white *berkoa*, or face-veil of the Arab women,) which forms the northern point of the bay into which the above *wadys*, and several similar torrents, issue. On the opposite side of the gulf, which is here, on a rough measurement, about twelve miles across, the mountains appeared to come down to the sea.

The next day, they were an hour in doubling *Abou Burko*; at two hours they passed a few date-trees and a well of bad water at *Wady Zoara*, where the maritime plain is nearly two miles in breadth; then, skirting another bay, reached, at three hours and a half, its northern promontory, called *Ras Om Haye*, — a name derived from the great quantity of serpents found there, which are said to be venomous. ‘The whole coast of the *Ælanitie Gulf*,’ Burekhardt states, ‘from *Ras Abou Mohammed* to *Akaba*, consists of a

\* See Deut. viii, 15.

succession of bays, separated from each other by such headlands. The *Ras Om Haye* forms the western extremity of the mountain *El Tyh*, whose straight and regular ridge runs quite across the peninsula, and is easily distinguished from the surrounding mountains.' On the opposite side of the gulf, the mountains here recede, and leave at their feet a sloping plain: they are steep, and rise into peaks. No Arabs live on the western coast, owing to the scanty pasturage. During the summer months only, it is visited by fishermen and others who come to collect the herb *doeyny*, from which the soda ashes are obtained, or to cut wood and burn it into charcoal. The Bedoweens prefer the upper road, and this route is seldom taken, therefore, except by stragglers. The shore continues to run N. E. by N. To the north of *Om Haye* is another bay, beyond which a bank of sand, several miles in breadth, runs out into the sea to a considerable distance; it is formed by the torrent of *Wady Mokabelat*, which, in the rainy season, spreads over a wide extent of ground, partly rocky and partly sandy, producing good pasturage. The view up this inlet is described as very singular. Its mouth is nearly two miles wide, and it narrows gradually upwards with perfect regularity, so that the eye can trace it for five or six miles, till it presents the appearance of only a perpendicular black line. The mountains northward of *Om Haye* decline considerably in height; but, at six hours and a half, after passing the promontory of *Djebel Sherafe*, they form high cliffs, which obstruct the road along the shore; and for two hours, Burckhardt, having turned inland, ascended and descended through several winding valleys. That which he first entered from the coast, called *Wady Mezeiryk*, affords excellent pasturage, and abounds with acacias and sweet-scented herbs; and here, for the first time since setting out from the convent, he discovered the traces of man in



some rude drawings of camels and mountain-goats, but without any inscriptions, on a sandstone rock. These were the only drawings which he met with in the mountains to the eastward of the convent. For an hour after returning to the coast, the route followed a range of black basaltic cliffs, into which the sea has worked several creeks or lagoons. At ten hours and a quarter from *Abou Burko*, the Travellers rested under a palm-tree near a deep, brackish well, in a plain forming the extremity of *Wady Taba*.

This was the extent of Burckhardt's journey in this direction. They had passed, at *Wady Mokabelat*, the limits of the Towara Arabs, and had entered the territory of the Heywat tribe, who have a bad character; the guide, therefore, durst advance no further. Akaba was not above five or six hours distant. 'Before sunset,' says our Traveller, 'I could distinguish a black line in the plain, where my sharp-sighted guides clearly saw the date-trees surrounding the castle, which bore N. E. by E. Before us was a promontory called *Ras Koreye*; and behind this, as I was told, there is another, beyond which begins the plain of Akaba. The castle is situated at an hour and a half, or two hours, from the western chain, down which the *hadji* route leads, and about the same distance from the eastern chain, the lower continuation of *Tor Hesma*. The descent of the western mountain is very steep, and has probably given to the place its name of Akaba, which in Arabic means a cliff or a steep declivity: it is probably the Akabet Aila of the Arabian geographers. Makrizi says, that the village Besak stands upon its summit. In Num. xxxiv, 4, the ascent of Akrabbim is mentioned, which appears to correspond very accurately to this ascent of the western mountain from the plain of Akaba. Into this plain, which surrounds the castle on every side except the sea, issues the *Wady el Araba*, the broad, sandy valley which leads towards

the Red Sea. At about two hours to the south of the castle, the eastern range of mountains approaches the sea. The plain of Akaba, which is from three to four hours in length from west to east, and, I believe, not much less in breadth northward, is very fertile in pasturage. To the distance of about one hour from the sea, it is strongly impregnated with salt, but, further north, sands prevail. The castle itself stands at a few hundred paces from the sea, and is surrounded with large groves of date-trees. It is a square building with strong walls, erected, as it now stands, by Sultan El Ghoury, of Egypt, in the sixteenth century. In its interior are many Arab huts. A market is held there, which is frequented by Hedjaz and Syrian Arabs, and small caravans arrive sometimes from Khalyl (Hebron). The castle has tolerably good water in deep wells. The Pasha of Egypt keeps here a garrison of about thirty soldiers, to guard the provisions deposited for the support of the Hadji, and for the use of the cavalry on their passage by this route to join the army in the Hedjaz. Cut off from Cairo, the soldiers of the garrison, often turn rebellious. Three years ago (from 1816), an aga made himself independent, and whenever a corps of troops passed, he shut the gates of the castle, and prepared to defend it. He had married a daughter of the chief of the Omran, and thus secured the assistance of that tribe. Being at last attacked by some troops sent against him from Cairo, he fled to his wife's tribe, and escaped into Syria.

It appears that the Gulf extends very little further east than the castle; at one hour's distance from which, in a southern direction, and on the eastern shore of the Gulf, is a smaller and half-ruined castle, called *Kaszer el Bedawy*: it is inhabited by Bedoweens. At about three quarters of an hour from this place, and the same distance from Akaba, Burckhardt was informed by some 'French Mamelouks'

whom he met at Cairo, that there are ruins in the sea, consisting of walls, houses, and columns, which are visible only at low water. If this be the case, the sea would appear to have gained in this direction, while it has been receding at Suez. These ruins, it is said, cannot easily be approached, on account of the shallows. He was informed too by his Arab guides, that, opposite the promontory of *Ras Koreye*, there is a small island, on which are extensive ruins, the works of infidels, built of stone: they are called *El Deir* (the convent),—a name commonly applied by the Arabs to any ruined building in which they suppose that the priests of the infidels once resided.

To the north of Akaba, in the mountain leading up to *Tor Hesma*, is a valley called *Wady Ithem*, through which a road leads eastward towards Nedjed. This valley, Burckhardt was told, is closed in one part by an ancient wall, constructed, according to the tradition of the Arabs, by a king Hadeid, to prevent the *Beni Helal* of Nedjed from making incursions into the plain. The whole of the tract of country about Akaba and to the W. N. W. of it, is particularly deserving of investigation, as likely to throw light on the Jewish history.\* The ridge of mountains which, under the modern names of *Djebel Shera* and *Djebel Hesma*, extends from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akaba, rising abruptly from the valleys *El Ghor* and *El Araba*, which are a prolongation of the valley of the Jordan, — may be pronounced, with little hesitation, to be the Mount Seir of Edom, which the Israelites are stated to have compassed many days before they again turned northward.† ‘The existence of the valley *El Araba*, the

\* M. Seetzen travelled from Hebron to Akaba, across the desert El Tyh, in 1806; but no detailed account of this route has been given to the public.

† Deut. ii, 1.

*Kadesh Barnea*, perhaps, of the Scriptures, appears,' says Burckhardt, 'to have been unknown both to ancient and modern geographers, although it forms a prominent feature in the topography of Syria and Arabia Petræa. It deserves to be thoroughly investigated; and travellers might proceed along it in winter time, accompanied by two or three Bedouin guides of the tribes of Howeytat and Terabein, who could be procured at Hebron. Akaba, or Eziongeber, might be reached in eight days by the same road by which the communication was anciently kept up between Jerusalem and her dependencies on the Red Sea; for this is both the nearest and the most commodious route, and it was by this valley that the treasures of Ophir were probably transported to the warehouses of Solomon.'

There are two Akabas; *Akaba Esshamie*, or the Syrian Akaba, and *Akaba el Masri*, the Egyptian Akaba. There is a day's distance between them. The latter is the Akaba above referred to. The other lies in the great *hadji* route from Damascus to Mekka, and, like the Egyptian Akaba, appears to take its name from a steep acclivity. Here would seem to be a formidable pass. 'From the foot of the castle walls, the Hadji descends a deep chasm, and it takes half an hour to reach the plain below. The pilgrims fear that passage, and repeat this prayer before they descend: 'May the Almighty God be merciful to them who descend into the belly of the dragon.' The mountain sinks gradually, and is lost at a great distance in the plain, which is very sandy.\* The *Akaba el Masri* is the Aila of the Arabian geographers, which is thus described by Ibn Haukal: 'Aila was formerly a small town, with some fruitful lands about it. It is the city of those Jews who were turned into

\* Burckhardt, p. 658.

hogs and monkeys.\* It stands upon the coast of the Red Sea, pretty near the road of the Egyptian pilgrims who go to Mekka. It is now nothing but a tower, the residence of a governor, who depends upon him of Grand Cairo. There are now no longer any sown fields there. There was formerly a fort built in the sea,† but it is all gone to ruin; and the commander lives in the tower that we were just speaking of, which stands by the water side.‡ Makrizi, the Egyptian historian, thus speaks of Aila: ‘It is from hence that the Hedjaz begins. In former times, it was the frontier place of the Greeks. At one mile from it is a triumphal arch of the Cæsars. In the time of the Islam, it was a fine town, inhabited by the *Beni Omeya*. Ibn Ahmed Ibn Touloun (a sultan of Egypt) made a road over the Akaba or steep mountain before Aila. There were many mosques at Aila, and many Jews lived there. It was taken by the Franks during the Crusades, but, in (A. H. 566, Salaheddyn transported ships upon camels from Cairo to this place, and recovered it from them. Near Aila, was formerly situated a large and handsome town called Aszyoun.’

— *Ezionggeber* §

Foiled in his hope of visiting Akaba, Burckhardt resolved to follow the shore of the gulf southward, and retraced his footsteps to Noweyba. On the 10th of May, he rested at two hours and three quarters

\* The tradition alluded to is twice mentioned in the Koran, chap. ii, and vii. The circumstance is fabled to have occurred in the days of King David, as a punishment of some fishermen of Elath for catching fish on the sabbath.

† This is perhaps the ‘ruins in the sea,’ referred to by the ‘French Mamelouks.’

‡ Cited in Calmet’s Dict. art. *Eloth*.

§ Burckhardt, p. 511. ‘After the decease of Alexander, and the wars consequent on his death, Ailana was subject to the kings of Egypt; afterwards to those of Syria; then to the Romans, who, in the days of Jerome, stationed here the tenth legion. In the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, there is mention of Beryllus, Bishop of Aila.’ — CALMET’S Dictionary.



S.W. of that point, in a valley called *Wady Djercimele*. Red coral, he says, is very common on this part of the coast. In the Gulf of Suez, the white is chiefly to be seen. In the evening, Burckhardt 'saw a great number of shell-fish leave the water, and crawl to one hundred or two hundred paces inland, where they passed the night, and at sun-rise returned to the sea.' The next day, he passed at four hours the granite promontory of *Djebel Abou Ma*; at eight hours, *Ras Methna*, where granite and porphyry are seen crossing each other in irregular layers; and rested, three quarters of an hour further, in *Wady Methna*. On the eastern shore opposite this place, is a valley called Mekna, inhabited by the tribe of Omran, who cross the gulf in small boats, bringing over sheep and goats for sale, of which they have large flocks. The mountains behind Mekna recede from the sea, and, further to the south, take a more eastward direction, leaving a chain of hills between them and the shore, rising immediately from the coast. In an hour and a half S.S.W. of *Wady Methna*, our Traveller reached a place called *Dahab* ('probably the Dizahab mentioned Deut. i, 1.²'), where an extensive cluster of date-trees covers a tongue of land running out about two miles beyond the line of shore. 'There are some low hummocks covered with sand close to the shore of the low promontory, probably occasioned by the ruins of buildings. The plantations are here enclosed by low walls, within many of which are wells of indifferent water; but, in one of them, about twenty-five feet deep, and fifty yards from the sea, we found the best water I had met with on any part of the coast in the immediate vicinity of the sea. About two miles to the south of the date-groves, are a number of shallow ponds, into which the sea flows at high tide. Here the salt is made, which supplies all the peninsula, as well as the fishermen for curing the fish. The openings of the ponds being closed with sand, the water is

left to evaporate, when a thick crust of salt is left. Dahab is a favourite resort of the fishermen, who catch the fish *boury* here in large quantities. In the midst of the small peninsula are about a dozen heaps of stones irregularly piled together, about five feet high, called *Kobour el Noszara* (the tombs of the Christians); and in crossing the tongue of land, Burckhardt observed the remains, apparently, of a causeway, beginning at the mountain and running out towards the point. To the S. of Dahab, the road along the shore is shut up by the cliffs which form the promontory of *El Shedjeir*. Our Traveller, therefore, now turned up the broad, sandy valley of *Wady Sal*, which empties itself into the sea. In the rocky sides of this valley, he observed about a dozen small grottoes, which he thinks must have been originally formed by man, but time had given them the appearance of natural cavities. His direction was now at first S.W. Leaving *Wady Sal*, he continued to ascend slightly through the windings of two broad, barren, sandy valleys, *Wady Beney* and *Wady Ghayb*, till, at the extremity of the latter, he reached in four hours the well of *Moayen el Kelab*.\* On the top of a neighbouring part of the granite cliff, is a similar pool, with reeds growing in it: the water is excellent: and near it is a spacious cavern in a 'beautiful granite rock,' affording a delicious shade to the traveller. The interior is covered on all sides with rude figures of mountain-goats, drawn with charcoal, by the shepherd boys and girls of the Towaras. At an hour and a half from the *Moayen el Kelab*, our Traveller rested near the head of a narrow, steep, and rocky valley, called *Wady Molahdje*. Its direction is S. by W.

Four hours' continual descent through the last-mentioned valley, brought our Traveller the next day into *Wady Orla*, which descends towards the sea. In

\* Perhaps *Moye el Kelb*, water of the dog.

two hours further, he turned to the right out of this valley, and entered a large plain called *Mofassel el Korfa*, bounded by *Djebel Tarfa*; a high chain extending from Sherm towards the centre of the peninsula. The plain is crossed by many torrents coming from the Tarfa, which collect and flow into the sea near *Wady Nakb*. After proceeding S. S. W. over the plain for three hours, the route approached the Tarfa, between which and the road are low hills called *Hodeybat el Noszara*, i. e. the hump-backs of the Christians. Three hours further, Burckhardt halted in a valley, formed by the lowest range of the Tarfa and an insulated chain of low hills, called *Roweysat Nimr*, the little heads of the tiger. Descending among these hills, he reached in two hours, the next day, the harbour of Sherm.

This is the only harbour on the western coast of the Gulf of Akaba which affords safe anchorage for large ships. There are two deep bays, separated by high land, in both of which ships may lie in perfect safety. On the shore of the more southern bay, stands the tomb of a sheikh, held in high veneration both by the Bedoweens and by mariners, who sometimes light a few lamps which are suspended from the roof; — whether it may serve as a beacon, does not appear. On the shore of the northern bay are several deep, copious, but brackish wells. Sherm is between four and five hours from *Ras Abou Mohammed*,\* the extreme point of the peninsula, which bears from it S. W. by S. Bedoweens are always found at Sherm, waiting with their camels to transport travellers who come by sea from the Hedjaz, and proceed by land to Tor and Suez. A short distance beyond Sherm, Burckhardt saw, ‘for the first and only time in this peninsula, *volcanic rocks*. For a distance of about two miles, the hills presented perpendicular cliffs

\* Ras Mohammed is in lat.  $27^{\circ} 44' N.$  — VALENTIA.

formed in high circles, none of them being more than from sixty to eighty feet in height: in other places, there was an appearance of volcanic craters. The rock is black, with sometimes a slight red appearance, full of cavities, and of a rough surface. The cliffs were covered with deep layers of sand, and the valleys at their feet were also overspread with it. Low sand-hills intervene between the volcanic rocks and the sea; and above them, towards the higher mountains, no traces of lava are found. It is possible, Burckhardt suggests, that other rocks of the same kind may occur towards *Ras Abou Mohammed*. If these be really volcanic rocks, as Burckhardt imagines, the circumstance is highly important, and deserves investigation.

Our Traveller now turned back towards the convent, in a direction N. E. by N., and after traversing a wide plain which extends as far as Nabk, rested, at six hours and a half from Sherm, in front of the uninhabited island of Tyran, lying about four miles off the shore in lat.  $27^{\circ} 43' N.$ , long.  $34^{\circ} 27' 50'' E.$ † Half its length is a narrow promontory of sand, and its main part to the south consists of a barren mountain. There is no sweet water on the island. Lord Valencia describes it as rising to a point in the centre, and as having a small island at each end, which at a little distance appear as if attached to it. Bedoweens of Heteym sometimes come here from the eastern coast, and remain for several weeks, to fish for pearls. The quantity obtained is very small, but they pick up a good deal of mother-of-pearl. At *Wady Nabk*, two hours further N. by E., the plain contracts, and the western chain begins to approach the shore. Here are large date-plantations and salt-pits, as at Dahab. Next to that place and Noweyba, Nabk is the principal station on the coast; but, except during the

\* Valencia.

date-harvest, it is inhabited only by fishermen, — the poorest of their tribe, who throw their nets from shore; for there is not a single boat or raft to be found on the whole of this coast. The Bedoweens of the eastern coast, however, have a few boats. Burckhardt now turned up *Wady Nabk*; at three hours and a half, passed the *Mofassel el Korfa*; at four hours and a quarter, crossed *Wady el Orla*; and in another hour, halted in *Wady Rahab*. The next day, he entered, in four hours and a half, *Wady Kyd*, one of the most noted date-valleys of the Sinai Arabs; and, pursuing its windings, came, in another hour, to a small rivulet, two feet across and six inches in depth, which is lost immediately below, in the sands of the *wady*. 'It drips down a granite rock which blocks up the valley, there only twenty paces in breadth, and forms, at the foot of the rock, a small pond, overshadowed by trees, with fine verdure on its banks. The rocks which overhang it on both sides, almost meet, and give to the whole the appearance of a grotto, most delightful to the traveller after passing through these dreary valleys. It is, in fact,' adds Burckhardt, 'the most romantic spot I have seen in these mountains.' The source of the rivulet is half an hour higher up the valley, the deep verdure of which forms a striking contrast with the glaring rocks, showing that wherever water passes in these districts, vegetation invariably accompanies it. Beyond the spot where the rivulet oozes out of the ground, vegetation ceases, and the valley widens. Notwithstanding its verdure, however, *Wady Kyd* is an uncomfortable halting-place, on account of the great number of gnats and ticks with which it is infested. The route now descended in a W. N. W. direction, through winding defiles, passed over *Djebel Mordam*, and, beyond that mountain, another called *Mohala*, on the northern declivity of which Burckhardt halted, after a day's march of twelve hours and



a quarter. The next day, he proceeded only three hours and a quarter, and rested at an Arab encampment in the plain called *Hazfet el Ras*. The day following, at the end of three hours and a half, he reached the great convent.

It is a little remarkable, that Dr Shaw, in his map of the journeyings of the Israelites, (copied, probably, from older maps,) places Mount Sinai to the south-east of Elim, near the extremity of the peninsula, although he evidently intends *Djebel Mousa* under that name. And Ibn Haukal describes the Ælanitic Gulf as 'bending southward as far as *Al Tour*, which is Mount Sinai, that by a very high cape, jutting out into the sea, divides it into two arms (or tongues)... The place where it parts the sea, is *Al Tour*, i. e. Mount Sinai, the longitude of which is almost the same as that of Ailah.\* This coincidence, together with the 'volcanic rocks' of Sherm mentioned by Burckhardt, would almost tempt one to indulge the imagination, that Mount Sinai might after all be found in this direction, and that the bold promontory of *Ras Mohammed* might prove the sea-ward front of the mount of God, or at least a mountain of the same range.† It is evident, however, that the Arabian geographer speaks of the whole peninsula under the

\* Calmet's Dict., art. *Eloth*.

† 'We passed Moilah, and ran up into the Gulf of Akaba. We sailed, for many hours, over or among large and beautifully green shoals, and cast our anchor on the shore of Midian. It is a silent, unpeopled shore: the "very great company" of early ages has with them passed away. Still, however, from the opposite side of the gulf, the rugged mountains of Arabia the Stony frown distinctly upon you. Sinai is one of this rude and lofty chain. I know not if its awful summit was seen by us; but, where we lay, the fisher in his bark, "when the God of Israel, even our God, spake to his chosen people," must have heard the thunder, and seen the lightning cloud.' — *Scenes and Impressions in Egypt, &c*, 8vo, p. 63.

name of *Al Tour*, in the same manner as it is called by Burckhardt and others, the peninsula of Sinai. '*Al Tour*,' it is added, 'is joined to the continent on the north side, but it is encompassed by the sea on the other sides.' No stress, therefore, can, we fear, be laid on the description above cited, with regard to the locality in question; but some future traveller may, perhaps, think it worth while to pursue the shadowy but magnificent idea, and explore the immediate vicinity of the southern cape which divides the gulfs of Suez and Akaba. Leaving this interesting tract, which has too long detained us, we must now descend the Red Sea, and prepare to visit the coast of Hedjaz.

#### VOYAGE DOWN THE RED SEA TO DJIDDA.

In 1807, M. Badhia, a Spaniard who travelled under the name of Ali Bey, and was every where received as a complete Mussulman, succeeded in penetrating the sacred territory, and in exploring the mysteries of the Kaaba. He is the only European who is known to have reached Mekka since Joseph Pitts, who was taken captive by the Algerines towards the close of the seventeenth century, and who, through the cruelties practised upon him, turned Mohammedan, and accompanied his master on the pilgrimage to the sacred city. Of his ingenuous and interesting narrative, we shall have occasion to avail ourselves in following the route of the former traveller.

On the 23d of Dec. 1806, Ali Bey embarked at Suez in a *dao* or *dow*, to cross the Red Sea to Djidda. These dows are vessels of a singular construction, 'their height being equal to a third of their length, which is increased, at the upper part, by a long projection at the head and stern, in the manner of the ancient Trojan galleys.' The ropes are made of the

bark of palm-trees; the sail, of extremely coarse cotton. They carry three sails of various sizes, and two little smack-sails, but never make use of more than one at a time. The crew consisted of fifteen sailors, 'as thin and black as apes.'\* The navigation of the Red Sea, this Traveller says, 'is dreadful.' They sailed almost continually between banks and rocks, above and under water, so that four or five men were required to keep watch constantly on the prow, to give notice to the steersman of the shoals. Should they commit an error, or discover the shoal too late, or should the steersman misunderstand the cry, (which sometimes happens,) or not keep far enough off, or, in keeping too far, (for he cannot see them,) run the ship on a neighbouring bank, or should the wind and current be too strong to admit of his changing his direction in time,—the ship would be dashed in pieces. To guard against these dangers, these dows have a false keel, which lessens the shock a little, and, if the weather is not rough, saves the vessel. The fact is, that, not daring to venture into the open sea, the native pilots coast round the shores at the risk of being dashed in pieces upon jutting rocks, or stranded upon coral reefs. In smaller vessels, however, better adapted to the navigation, a voyage in the Red Sea is not without its attractions. A recent Traveller, who embarked at Mocha for Kosseir, in a large kind of boat called a *khanja*,† thus describes the voyage. 'We were

\* The vessel in which Niebuhr crossed the sea, was 'large enough to have carried at least forty guns,' and, 'besides her own freight, towed after her three large shallows and one small; the three larger filled with passengers, horses, sheep, and even women of pleasure.'

† 'These boats, though very large, are without any deck, save a little on the bows and that of the front awning, under which is the cabin, open to the front, without ports or windows, but with a neat open-work at the side, superior to either for light, air, and cheerfulness.'

thirteen days running to Djidda. The navigation is intricate, the shoals of coral numerous, but the waters smooth and clear as pilot could desire. It was beautiful to look down into this brightly transparent sea, and mark the coral, here in large masses of honey-combed rock, there in light branches of a pale-red hue, and the beds of green sea-weed, and the golden sand, and the shells, and the fish sporting round your vessel, and making colours of a beauty to your eye, which is not their own. Twice or thrice we ran on after dark for an hour or two; and though we were all familiar with the "sparkling of the sea round the boat of night," never have I seen it, in other waters, so superlatively splendid. A rope dipped in it, and drawn forth, came up as a string of gems, but with a life, and light, and motion, the diamond does not know.\* This luminous appearance, however, is

\* Scenes and Impressions, p. 35. Mr Bruce's assertion has been noticed at p. 112, that he never saw a weed of any sort in the *Yam Suf*. The writer above cited is not the only one whose testimony supplies a direct contradiction of that statement. Lord Valentia affirms, that the Red Sea abounds with sea-weed more than any other; and Mr Dawson Turner, in his beautiful work on the Fuci, has given drawings of many of the specimens brought home by his lordship. Equally incorrect is the assertion of Sir F. Henniker, that the coral of the *Red Sea* is all *white*. With regard to the luminous appearance of the waters, Lord Valentia was astonished, when in twenty-two fathom, off the coast of Abyssinia, with the white appearance of breakers. 'The captain immediately let go the anchor. The pilots declared that it was only fish, and so it proved; for, soon afterwards, they approached and passed under the vessel. It is singular, that the same circumstance should have been observed by D. Juan de Castro, and should have had the same effect, of inducing him to let go his anchor. He does not account for it, because it happened in the night; but he mentions that it cast flames like fire; which confirms the conjecture, that the brilliant appearance of the sea is owing to fish-spawn and animalculæ.' — *Valentia's Travels*, (8vo) vol. ii, p. 246; vol. iii, p. 334.

probably confined to the spawning period, for all the travellers who mention it, visited the Red Sea between the latter end of December and the end of February.

It is customary for the vessels to touch both at Tor and at Yambo (written *Jenboa* by Ali Bey). At the latter, which is the port of Medinah, those pilgrims land who intend to take that city in their way to Mekka, and it is also a point of disembarkation for Moggrebin pilgrims. It is a walled town, but very small, and of most wretched aspect : it has a safe harbour.\* The governor's residence (for the Turks have a small garrison here) is washed by the sea. The people are poor and ill-clothed. Immediately outside the Medinah gate, the traveller finds himself in the sandy and cheerless desert. A small, poor, rude gateway of stone, 'insignificant as that which would open on the court-yard of a rustic *auberge* in many parts of France,' is dignified with the name of 'the gate of Egypt.' Near it is a crowded burial-ground, and, not far off, a windmill, said to have been erected by a *Nazarene* who died at Yambo, and whose grave is '*somewhere in the sand.*' This stands, however, as the Christian's monument : could there have been a more striking one ?

On the 12th of January, Ali Bey arrived at '*Ara-bok*, which is the northern extremity of the *belled el haram*, or holy land. The ship ran upon the sand purposely to enable the pilgrims to perform the first duty of their pilgrimage, which is called *Jaharmo*. It consists in throwing themselves into the sea ; in bathing, and making a general ablution with the water and sand ; in saying a prayer while naked ; in covering the body from the waist to the knees with a cloth without a seam, which they call *ihram* ; and in taking some steps in the direction of Mekka, while

\* Lat. 24° 7' 6" N.; long. 37° 32' 30" E. — ALI BEY.



uttering a prescribed invocation. They afterwards form some little heaps of sand with their hands, embark dressed as above mentioned, and repeat the same prayer during the remainder of their voyage.' Arabok (Rabbock, Rabogh) is a permanent station of Bedoweens, on the southern side of Cape Wardan. The *ihram*, or *hirrawem*, is the common dress of the Arabs of Hedjaz; and Mohammed's design was, to make all the pilgrims appear with due humility. The Turks, who are accustomed to warm clothing and furred cloaks, find it extremely uncomfortable to make the exchange, and, on the plea of indisposition, often resume, after performing these rites, their ordinary dress. Besides the body-cloth, the only garment which the *hadjis* are properly allowed to wear, is another large white wrapper thrown over the shoulders as a scarf; and they put on a pair of *gimgameea*, or sandals, which cover only the toes. 'In this manner,' says Pitts, 'like humble penitents, they go from Rabbock, till they come to Mekka, to approach the temple; many times enduring the scorching heat of the sun till their very skin is burned off their backs and arms, and their heads swollen to a very great degree. Yet, when any man's health is, by such austerities, like to be impaired, they may lawfully put on their clothes, on condition still, that, when they come to Mekka, they sacrifice a sheep, and give it to the poor. During the time of their wearing this mortifying habit, which is about the space of seven days, it is held unlawful for them so much as to cut their nails, or to kill a louse or a flea though sucking their blood; but yet, if they are so troublesome that they cannot well endure it any longer, it is lawful for them to remove them from one place of the body to another !' Moreover, from this moment, Ali Bey states, 'they must not shave their heads until they have made the seven turns round the house of God, kissed the black stone, drank of the water of

the sacred well of Zemzem, and made the seven journeys between the sacred hills of Saffa and Meroua.'

On the 13th, our Hadji anchored in the harbour of Djidda, situated, according to his observations, in lat.  $21^{\circ}33'14''$  N., long.  $39^{\circ}6'$  E. of Greenwich. He describes it as a pretty town: the streets are regular; the houses are two and three stories high, and some are spacious and handsome. There are five mosques, but they are all poor and ugly. The town is surrounded with a good wall, with irregular towers; and at ten paces distance outside, there is a ditch, about ten feet broad and twelve deep; but it is entirely useless, and, although of late construction, will not last long, as the sides are cut perpendicularly, without any lining. It is filled with dirt at the city gate, which serves as a passage instead of a drawbridge. 'The houses in Djidda,' Lord Valentia says, 'are far superior to those of Mocha. They are built of large blocks of very fine madrapore. The doorways are handsomely arched and covered with fretwork ornaments, carved in the stone: the zig-zag, so prevalent in the Saxon arch, is the most common. The windows are numerous and large. I could not but be struck with the resemblance which exists between these arches and those in our cathedrals. Some were pointed, like the Gothic, including three semicircular windows. Others, particularly those over the doors, were flat like the Saxon, and retired one within another, till the inner one was sufficiently small to receive the door, which is never large. Djidda is a new town; but these excellent houses are probably formed after the model of the more ancient habitations of Mekka. If so, the architecture which we call Gothic, existed in Arabia long before it was known in Europe. The streets are very narrow, which is an advantage in a tropical country, as they are consequently shaded during most part of the day. The palace is very

pleasantly situated on the water's edge. The custom-house faces the sea, and is a handsome, lofty building. The ground rises from the sea, and gives the town a much better appearance than Mocha, though it is not so long. The sea also washes its walls at both ends, and is close to the houses in the middle : this adds greatly to the effect. The bazar was well filled, though it was Ramadan, with plenty of wheat, pulse, dates, figs, raisins, and bread ; the latter in small cakes, and very good.' Ali Bey says, the public markets are well supplied, but the prices are high. A fowl costs a Spanish piaster. The vegetables are brought from a distance, for there are no gardens at Djidda, there being neither river nor spring in the neighbourhood. The inhabitants drink rain water, which is collected in reservoirs among the hills, and brought by Arabs on the backs of camels. It is said to be excellent. Many of the poorer people earn a scanty livelihood by fishing. The population is stated by the last-mentioned Traveller at 5,000 souls. 'There is a great deal of luxury,' he adds, 'in the costume and apartments of the rich ; but, among the lower orders, there are many very poor, some almost naked and in the greatest misery. The garrison is composed of two hundred Turkish and Arab soldiers. But we must not imagine that they mount guard, or execute the least military duty. Their business is confined to passing both night and day in the coffee-house, drinking, smoking, and playing at chess. There are no Europeans ; but there are a few Christians, Copts, confined to a house, or barrack, contiguous to the landing-place. The most important person in the town is the principal merchant, Sidi Alarbi Djilauni : he is a man of talent, and very much attached to the English. I saw a prodigious number of dogs in the streets, which are without masters, as in all the Mussulman towns. They appear to be regularly

organised, or divided into tribes or families; for, when one of them has the misfortune or the boldness to leave his own quarter, they set up a terrible noise, and the intruder never escapes without receiving serious wounds. The cats, which resemble those of Europe, are nearly equal in number to the dogs. There are few flies, and no gnats or other insects.'

'The harbour,' Lord Valentia says, 'is formed by innumerable reefs of madrapore, which extend to about four miles from the shore, leaving many narrow channels between, in which there is a good bottom at from six to twelve fathom, and where the sea is as smooth as glass, when it blows the heaviest gale. The entrance is, of course, difficult, but the rocks are visible when the sun is behind the vessel, and the native pilots unerringly steer in safety by the eye alone. Even large ships can enter; but for dows, it is a most excellent harbour, and the number that even now frequent it, is very great. Sir Home Popham has given an excellent plan of the harbour. The English formerly carried on a considerable trade with Djidda, but it gradually declined in consequence of the extortions of the shereef and his servants, under the name of presents; and, for many years before the expedition into the Red Sea, not a vessel had arrived, except the *Surprise*, Captain Gilmore, which the vizier immediately plundered, but which Admiral Blanket as quickly obliged him to restore. From that time till the arrival of the *Olive* (1806), the English flag had not been seen in Djidda.'

The country round the town is a desert plain. The climate is very variable. Ali Bey observed the hygrometer pass in a very short time from great drought to extreme moisture. 'The north wind, traversing the deserts, arrives in such a state of dryness, that the skin is parched, paper cracks as if it were in the mouth of an oven, and the air is always



loaded with sand. If the wind changes to the south, every thing is an opposite extreme : the air is damp, and every thing that you handle feels of a clammy wetness. This moisture relaxes the animal fibres, and is very disagreeable. The inhabitants, notwithstanding, assert that it is more salubrious than the aridity of the north wind. The greatest heat I observed during my stay, was  $23^{\circ}$  of Reaumur. When the south wind blew, I perceived the atmosphere to be loaded with a sort of fog.'

Djidda owes its celebrity and its consequence to its being the sea-port nearest to Mekka, from which it is distant about forty miles. The holy city, being surrounded with a barren desert, has invariably depended on Africa for its supplies ; and the Grand Seignior has availed himself of this circumstance to secure a share of the profits derived from the trade. 'He used formerly, therefore, regularly to appoint a pasha, who lived in the citadel of Djidda with a Turkish guard, and divided the receipts of the custom-house with the shereef.\* While the power of the Porte continued undiminished, its minister was treated with great respect, for any insult would have been punished by the powerful force which annually accompanied the caravan of pilgrims from Syria; but, when Egypt was torn by internal convulsions, when the pashas of Asia threw off, in a great degree, the control of the

\* According to Niebuhr, however, the authority of the pasha was little more than nominal, the supreme authority being shared between the shereef's vizier and the Turkish *kiaja*, the officer entrusted with the supervision of the customs, who was changed every year, and sometimes refused to obey the pasha himself. The customs were fixed at 10 *per cent*, but, being estimated arbitrarily, were often equal to 12 or 15 *per cent*. The English, however, paid only 8 *per cent*, which they were allowed to discharge in goods, while all others were required to produce money. An Englishman had at that time resided here several years.



Porte; and when the Wahhabee power arose, and cut off the communication between Constantinople and Mekka, the shereef became disinclined to give half his receipts to a person whom he no longer feared, but considered as a useless incumbrance. Disputes naturally ensued, which at length ended in open hostilities; and Ghalib (the reigning shereef) actually attacked the pasha in the citadel, nearly destroyed it, and got rid of him by the more secret means of poison.' At the time of Lord Valentia's travels in these parts (1805-6), no representative of the Protector of the Holy Places (so the Grand Seignior is styled) was to be found in Arabia; and the shereef of Mekka was shut up by the Wahhabees within his walled towns. In 1763, when Niebuhr visited Arabia, Hedjaz had, in Moosnud, an active, able, and victorious sovereign, and so rigid an administrator of justice, that it was said, a camel might go safely from one end of Hedjaz to the other. 'During the nineteen years that his son has ruled,' remarks Lord Valentia, 'how totally has every thing been changed! The proud Arabs of Beni Koreish, the descendants of the prophet, to whom the earth was given, are shut up in four wretched towns,' (Mekka, Medinah, and their respective sea-ports,) 'whence they behold their country devastated without the means of saving it; and instead of receiving that respect which for twelve centuries they have claimed throughout Asia, they are obliged to submit to the mandates of an Abyssinian slave, who has no real merit except valour, but who is recommended to his master by a willingness to commit every crime.'

The soldiers of the vizier at this time in Djidda, were about a thousand in number, all richly clothed, their matchlocks and *jambeas* highly ornamented with silver. When Lord Valentia landed to pay his respects to the vizier, several of his officers were in waiting at the landing-place, very handsomely

dressed in scarlet English broad-cloth lined with yellow satin. A double line of soldiers reached to the door of the hall of audience, and the whole of the troops made a very respectable appearance. They must have undergone a considerable reduction, apparently, when Ali Bey was at Djidda the following year, as he states their number at only two hundred. The critical state of the country at that period, has already been described in the introductory sketch.\* In 1823, Djidda had again received a Turkish governor, whose portrait is thus strikingly drawn by the graphic pen of the Author of 'Scenes and Impressions in Egypt.'

'Rustan Aga himself was a fine-looking, haughty, martial man, with mustachios, but no beard; he wore a robe of scarlet cloth. Hussein Aga, who sat on his left, had a good profile, a long grizzled beard, with a black ribbon bound over one eye, to conceal its loss. He wore a robe of pale blue. The other person, Araby Jellauny, was an aged and a very plain man. The attendants for the most part wore large dark-brown dresses, fashioned into the short Turkish vest or jacket, and the large full Turkish trowsers; their sashes were crimson, and the heavy ornamented butts of their pistols protruded from them; their crooked scimitars hung in silken cords before them; they had white turbans, large mustachios, but the cheek and chin clearly shaven. Their complexions were in general very pale, as of men who pass their lives in confinement. They stood with their arms folded, and their eyes fixed on us. I shall never forget them; there were a dozen or more. I saw nothing like this after, not even in Egypt; for Djidda is an excellent government, both on account of its port and its vicinity to Mekka; and Rustan Aga had a large establishment, and was something of a magnifico. He

\* Page 102.

has the power of life and death. A word, a sign from him, and these men who stand before you in attitude so respectful, with an aspect so calm, so pale, would smile and slay you. We know that the name of Englishman is a tower of strength,—that he may sit among these despotic lords, fearless, proud, and cheerful. So, indeed, may all Europeans whose countries are strong enough to protect their subjects. But we have to do with the manners of these people; and we know, that not fourteen years have passed since Ali Pasha, whom I have heard *laugh*, as the assembled beys of the mamelukes passed from the hall of audience, whither he had invited them, gave the signal for a general massacre of them and their brave followers:—such is the Turk.

‘What most gratified me was the sight of the Turkish soldiery. There was a large body in garrison here,—a division of that army which had been sent from Egypt against the Hedjaz, two or three years before. Scattered in groups through the bazar, and reclining or squatted on the benches of the coffee-houses, these men were every where to be seen; some in turbans and vests covered with tarnished embroidery; others only in waistcoats, with the small red cap, the red stocking, the bare knee, the white kilt, the loose shirt sleeve, which, with many, was tucked up to the very shoulder, and showed a nervous, hairy arm: all had pistols in their red girdles. Their complexions and features were various; but very many among them had eyes of the lightest colours, and the hair on their upper lips, of a sun-scorched brown, or of a dirty yellow. They have a look at once indolent and ferocious, such as the tiger would have basking in the sun; and they are not less savage. The Turkish soldier would sit, smoke, and sleep for a year or years together: he hates exertion, scorns discipline, but has within him a capability of great efforts, and an undaunted spirit. He will rise from his long rest to give

the "wild halloo," and rush fearless to the battle. Such are the men who shed the blood of the peaceful Greek families in the gardens of Scio; and such are the men (let it not be forgotten) who, a short century ago, encamped under the walls of Vienna.'

Ali Bey rested a week at Djidda, to recover from the effects of fatigue and indisposition. At length, on the 21st of January, he set out at three o'clock P.M. for Mekka, and at half-past eight arrived at the foot of the mountains. He travelled in a sort of sofa, roofed with boughs, and placed on the back of a camel: he calls it a *shevria*. In his weak state, he found the camel's motion almost insupportable. About eight leagues E. of Djidda, they rested at a small *douar* (village or station) in a sandy valley, enclosed by mountains of porphyry, where a few conical huts have been set up for the accommodation of caravans, round a well of brinish water. The place is called *El Hadda*. The huts are about seven feet high, and seven or eight in diameter, formed of sticks like a cage, and covered with palm-leaves; the whole was enclosed with a hedge. There was a little vegetation in the neighbourhood, and it was interesting, says our Traveller, to see the camels eat. 'The driver placed a circular mat upon the ground, and on this he laid a pile of brambles and herbs cut very small; he then permitted the camels to approach, when they immediately squatted themselves down upon the ground all round at regular distances, and began to eat with a sort of politeness and order. They each ate the herbs before them by a little at a time, and if either of them left his place, his companion appeared gently to reprove him, which made the other feel his fault, and return to it again. In a word, the camel's table is a faithful copy of that of their masters.' At half-past three on the following day, our Traveller again set forward by a fine, broad, and straight road. As he advanced, he began to see several little woods; and after sunset,



‘passed some volcanic mountains covered with black lava. At eleven at night, having climbed over some small hills, the route led into a deep and narrow defile, in which the road is cut in steps through the different windings. This defile would make a strong military position. At midnight, our Hadji arrived at the first houses of the city of

## MEKKA.

Here, several Moggrebins were waiting his arrival, with little pitchers filled with water from the well of Zemzem, which they presented to him. Others were also laying in wait in the hope of securing him as a lodger, for the lodgings are the principal speculations of the inhabitants; but their disputes were soon cut short by the person whom Ali Bey had charged with providing every thing for him during his stay, by whom he was conducted to the house prepared for him near the temple. Pilgrims ought to enter the city on foot; but, in consequence of his illness, our Hadji remained on his camel till he reached his lodging.

His first duty was to perform a general ablution; after which he was conducted in procession towards the temple, with all his people, the *dilleel*, or guide, reciting prayers all the way. On arriving at the *Bab-es-salem* (gate of peace or welcome), at the northern angle of the temple, the pilgrim takes off his sandals; and on his entering the great square in which the Kaaba stands, the *dilleel* suddenly makes a stand, and pointing to it with his finger, exclaims, *Shouf, shouf, el Beit-Allah el Haram!* Look, look, the house of God, the holy! ‘The crowd that surrounded me,’ says Ali Bey ‘the portico of columns half-hidden from view, the immense size of the temple, the Kaaba or house of God, covered with the black cloth from top to bottom, and surrounded with a circle of lamps or lanterns, the hour, the silence of



the night, and this man's solemn tone, —all served to form an imposing picture, which will never be effaced from my memory.

The following are the ceremonies observed on this occasion, such as they were performed by Ali Bey himself: 'The pilgrims go seven times round the Kaaba, beginning at the black stone or the eastern angle, and passing the principal front, in which is the door; thence turning to the west and south, outside of the stones of Ismael. Being arrived at the southern angle, they stretch out the right arm; when, having touched the angular marble with the hand, taking great care that the lower part of their garment does not touch the uncovered base, they pass it over the face and beard, saying, 'In the name of God, the greatest God, praises be to God;' and they continue to walk towards the north-east, saying, 'Oh great God! be with me! Give me the good things of this world, and those of the next!' Being returned to the eastern angle, they raise their hands as at the beginning of the canonical prayer, and cry, 'In the name of God, the greatest God.' They afterwards say, with their hands down, 'Praises be to God!' and kiss the black stone. Thus terminates the first tour. The second is like the first, except that the prayers are different from the angle of the black stone to that of the south; but they are the same from the latter to the former, and are repeated with the same forms during the seven rounds. At the end of the seventh, and after having kissed the black stone, they recite in common a short prayer, standing near the door of the Kaaba, from whence they go to a sort of chapel, called *Makam Ibrahim*, or the place of Abraham, situated between the Kaaba and the arch *Bab-es-salem*, when they recite a common prayer. They then go to the well Zemzem, and draw buckets of water, of which they drink as much as they can swallow. After this, they leave the temple by the gate of Saffa,

from whence they go up a small street facing, which forms what is called *Djebel Saffa*, the hill of Saffa. At the end of this street, which is terminated by a portico, composed of three arches upon columns, ascended by steps, is the sacred place called Saffa. When the pilgrims have arrived there, they turn their faces towards the gate of the temple, and recite a short prayer standing. The procession then directs its course through the principal street, and passes a part of *Djebel Meroua* (the hill of Meroua), the pilgrims reciting some prayers at the end of the street, which is terminated by a great wall. They then ascend some steps, and, turning their faces towards the temple, the view of which is interrupted by the intervening houses, recite a short prayer standing, and continue to go from the one hill to the other seven times, repeating prayers in a loud voice as they proceed, and short ones at the two sacred places, which constitute the seven journeys between the two hills. These being completed, there are a number of barbers in waiting to shave the pilgrims' heads, which they do very quickly, at the same time saying prayers in a loud tone, which the former repeat after them, word for word. This operation terminates the first ceremonies of the pilgrimage to Mekka. It is generally known, that almost all Mussulmans let a tuft of hair grow upon the crown of their head. The reformer Abd-ul Wahhab declared this to be a sin; and as the Wahhabies govern the country, every body is obliged to shave his head. In consequence of this, my long tuft was swept away by the inexorable barber.'

The Temple of Mekka, known to all true Mussulmans under the name of *El Haram*, the holy place, is situated nearly in the middle of the city, which is built in a narrow valley, having a considerable slope from north to south. In order to form a level area for the great court of the temple, the ground has evidently been hollowed out, subsequently to the erection

of the Kaaba, which is the only ancient edifice in the temple; so that, on entering it in any direction, you descend several steps; and the oval surface paved with marble that immediately surrounds the Kaaba, upon which the pilgrims perform their rounds, is the lowest part. The door of the Kaaba, and the floor of the interior, are considerably above the pavement of the court; but it is easy to perceive, Ali Bey says, that they were originally on a level with the streets that surround the temple, and that there was then no occasion for a staircase to enter it. The great court forms a parallelogram of about 536 feet by 356, surrounded with a double piazza;\* the fronts of the two longer sides presenting thirty-six, and the two shorter sides twenty-four arches, slightly pointed, supported by columns of grayish marble, of different proportions. Each side is composed of two naves, formed by a triple row of arches, so that there may be counted more than five hundred columns and pilasters. Instead of a column, between every fourth arch, there is an octangular pilaster of hewn stone, about three feet in diameter. The capitals of the columns which front the court are 'very fine, although they do not belong to either of the five orders of architecture;' but the capitals of the interior columns are stated to be all of either the Corinthian or the Composite: some are exquisitely carved. The pedestals are of various form and proportion: 'some have, by an extravagant whim of the architect, a Corinthian capital reversed.' The arches that front the court, are all crowned with little conical cupolas: the interior ones have low spherical vaults. The four fronts are also surmounted with stone ornaments, very much resembling *fleurs-de-lys*. All the galleries, as well as the

\* 'The form of it,' says Pitts, 'is much resembling that of the Royal Exchange in London, but, I believe, it is near ten times bigger.'

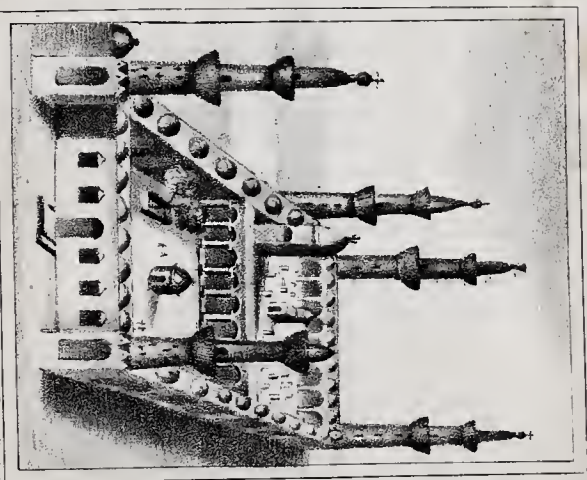
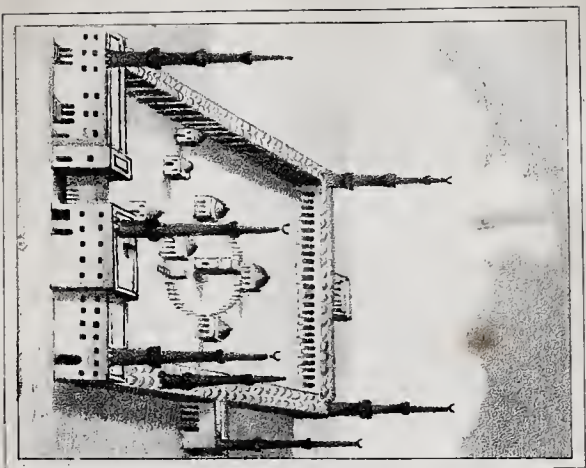
paths crossing the area to the Kaaba, are paved with hewn stones of quartz rock, of which also the walls of the temple are built. Like the mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, *El Haram* is partially surrounded with houses which join the walls, so that it presents no external front; and some of the houses have windows that overlook the interior. The eastern angle of the temple is rounded off, to conform to the line of the principal street, so that the gallery is narrowed at that angle, hardly allowing space enough to pass between the wall and the column. In the south-eastern gallery, there is, for a short distance, a fourth row of arches. The temple has nineteen gates, with thirty-eight arches.\* The *Bab Saffa* is the only one that has an ornamented front: all the rest are very plain. There are seven minarets; one at each angle of the temple; one between the *Bab Ziada* and the *Bab Douriba*, on the north-western side; and two which are detached from the body of the building, and stand among the houses adjoining the north-eastern wing: they are all octangular, and of three stages, but vary in size. The other parts of the temple consist, according to Ali Bey, of the Kaaba, the well of Zemzem, the *Makam Ibrahim* (place of Abraham), the places of the four orthodox sects,† two *kobbas* or chapels, the arch called *Bab-es-salem*, *el monbar* (the tribune), and *el daureh*, the wooden staircase by which access is obtained to the Kaaba.‡

\* Pitts says: ‘It hath about forty-two doors to enter into it, not so much, I think, for necessity as figure; for, in some places, they are close by one another.’ He probably mistook every arch with a false door for its separate entrance.

† For an account of the founders of the four sects of Hanifites, Malekites, Shafeites, and Hanbalites, see *Mod. Trav.*, Palestine, p. 107. Each has in like manner its separate place of prayer in the *Haram Shereef* at Jerusalem.

‡ The annexed plate is copied from one given by Niebuhr, on the authority of a Turkish original. The figures should be





MECCA,

THE GREAT MOSQUES AT  
AND MEDINA.

*Published by J. W. Johnson*





The greatest curiosity, and the only part which lays claim to high antiquity, is the Kaaba itself, otherwise called *Beit Allah*, the House of God. It is described by Ali Bey as a quadrilateral tower, the sides and angles of which are unequal, so that its plan forms a true trapezium. The size of the edifice, and the black cloth which covers it, make this irregularity disappear, and give it the figure of a perfect square. It is built of square-hewn but unpolished stones of quartz, schorl, and mica, brought from the neighbouring mountains. Its height is thirty-four feet four inches, and the sides vary from twenty-nine to thirty-eight feet in length. The black stone is built or 'incrusted' in the angle formed by the N. E. and S. E. sides, and is believed to face exactly the East. It is raised forty-two inches above the pavement, and is bordered all round with a large plate of silver about a foot broad. This miraculous block, which they call *Hhajera el Assouad*, the heavenly stone, is believed by all true Moslems to have been originally a transparent hyacinth presented to Abraham by the angel Gabriel,

explained as follows: 1. The Kaaba. 2. *El Monbar*. 3. *El Makam Ibrahim* (the place of the Shafeites). 4. *El Makam Hhanbeli* (place of the Hanbalites). 5. *El Makam Maleki* (place of the Malekites.) 6. *El Makam Hhanefi* (place of the Hanifites). 7. The well Zemzem. 8. *El Kobbataïra*, buildings in which they keep the lamps, oil, &c. 9. The position of the Black Stone. 10. The belt embroidered with letters of gold. 11. *El Hajar Isma l.* 12. *Bab es Salam*. 13. *Bab Keid Bey*. 14. *Bab-en-Nebbi*. 15. *Bab Ali*. 16. *Bab Saffa*. 17. *Bab Essiade*. 18. *Bab Ibrahim*. 19. *Minaret Ali*. 20. *Minaret Keid Bey*. 21. *Minaret Abbassioun*. 22. *Minaret Udda*. 23. *Minaret Kalaoun*. 24. *Minaret Bab Omra*. Neither *Bab Keid Bey*, *Bab Essiade*, nor *Bab Omra*, are mentioned by Ali Bey under those names; and, if Niebuhr's authority be correct, his enumeration of the gates is in other respects inaccurate.

who brought it from heaven; but, being touched by an impure woman, it became black and opaque.\* It is, in fact, Ali Bey says, 'a fragment of volcanic basalt, sprinkled throughout its circumference with small, pointed, coloured crystals, and varied with red feldspath upon a dark black ground like coal, except one of its protuberances, which is a little reddish. The continual kisses and touchings of the faithful have worn the surface uneven, so that it has now a muscular appearance, with one deep hollow.' It is discovered through an opening in the black cloth, which covers the whole of the building except the base, called *Tob el Kaaba* (the shirt of the Kaaba) A new *Tob* is brought every year from Cairo, and put up on Easter day; but, instead of being spread out at first, like the old one, it is fastened up in drapery, to keep it from the hands of the pilgrims. A new curtain also is annually sent to cover the door, which is truly magnificent, being entirely embroidered with gold and silver. At about two thirds of its height, the *Tob* is embroidered with a band of gold two feet broad, with inscriptions from the Koran, which are repeated on all the four sides: it is called *el hazem*, the belt. The belt and the curtain are the perquisite of the sultan-shereef, except when the first day of Easter falls on a Friday: they are then sent to the Grand Seignior, to whom the water of Zemzem is sent every year. The old *Tob* is cut up and sold at five francs a cubit, but, being covered with inscriptions, it is not a very marketable article.† On the N. W.

\* Pitts writes it *haggar esswaed*, and ascribes its black colour to the sins of the multitudes who kiss it.

† The demand for it seems to have declined. Pitts says: 'The *haggas* care not almost how much they give for a piece of it. They being so eager after these shreds, a piece of the bigness of a sheet of paper will cost a *sultane*, i. e. nine or ten shillings. Yea, the very cotton rope to which the lower

side of the Kaaba, there is a sort of parapet, above five feet high and three wide, enclosing a semicircular place paved with very fine marbles, (some of them of a fine green,) called *El Hajar Ismaël*, the stones of Ismael. Between this parapet and the body of the Kaaba is a space of about six feet, leaving a passage on either side. 'It is thought that Ismael was buried in this place.' The basement of the building is of marble, twenty inches high, and projecting ten inches. There are large bronze rings fixed in it at regular distances all round, to which is fastened by strings, the lower border of the black cloth that covers the walls. The threshold of the entrance is about six feet above the pavement, — Pitts says, 'as high as a man can reach.' There are folding doors of wood plated over with silver, and fastened with an enormous silver padlock. Except in extraordinary cases, this door is opened only twice a year: it is then entered by a sort of ladder-staircase, about eight feet wide, and consisting of ten steps, with rails on each side, mounted on six large rollers.

The interior of the Kaaba consists simply of a room or hall, with two wooden pillars, of less than two feet diameter, in the middle, to support the roof. Both the columns and the walls, to within five feet of the floor, as well as the roof, are covered with a magnificent cloth of rose-coloured silk, sprinkled with flowers embroidered in silver, and lined with white silk. Every sultan of Constantinople is obliged to

part of the covering was fastened, is also cut in pieces, untwisted, and sold. Many buy a piece of the covering on purpose to have it laid on their breast when they are dead, and be buried with them: this they carry always with them, esteeming it as an excellent amulet to preserve them from all manner of danger. I am apt to believe that the sultan-shirreef makes as much money of the old covering as the new may cost, although, they say, that the work that is in it, is alone the employment of many people for a whole year.'

send a new one when he mounts the throne; and this is the only occasion on which it is changed. 'As the columns were beginning to decay at the bottom, where they are not covered with the rich cloth, they have covered them with bands of wood, one or two inches in breadth, placed perpendicularly, and fastened together by bronze nails gilded. The lower part of the walls, which is also left uncovered, is inlaid with fine marbles, some plain, others with flowers in arabesque or relief, or with inscriptions. The floor is paved also with the finest marble. There are bars that go from one column to the other, and from both columns to the wall, which are said to be of silver; and an infinite number of gold lamps are suspended from it one over another. At the northern angle of the hall is a staircase by which persons ascend to the roof: it is covered by a partition, the door of which is shut. The roof is flat above, and has only one very large gutter upon the north-west side, by which the rain runs off into the stones of Ismael: it is said to be of gold; it appeared to me, however, to be only of gilt bronze.'\*

*El Makam Ibrahim* is a parallelogram facing the door of the Kaaba, at the distance of thirty-four feet: it is twelve feet nine inches long, and seven feet eight inches wide. The roof is supported by six pilasters, rather more than six feet high. The half

\* 'I profess,' says Pitts, 'I found nothing worth seeing in it; only two wooden pillars in the midst, to keep up the roof, and a bar of iron fastened to them, on which hung *three or four* silver lamps, which are, I suppose, but seldom if ever lighted. In one corner of the *Beit* is an iron or brass chain, (I cannot tell which, for I made no use of it,) the pilgrims just clap it about their necks in token of repentance. The floor is of marble. The walls, though of marble on the inside, are hung all over with silk, which is pulled off before the hadjjis enter.' The lamps seem to have multiplied since Pitts was at Mekka.



of the enclosure nearest the Kaaba is surrounded with a fine railing of bronze, the door of which is always kept fastened with a silver padlock. This railing encloses a sort of sarcophagus, hung with a black cloth magnificently embroidered with gold and silver, and having large golden acorns attached to it. This sarcophagus, we are told, 'is nothing else than a large stone that served Abraham for a footstool to construct the Kaaba, and increased in height as the building advanced, to facilitate his labours; at the same time that the stones came out miraculously, already squared, from the spot where the footstool now stands, and passed into Ismaël's hands, and thence into his father's.'\* A small cupola surmounts this part of the building.

*El Bir Zemzem* (the well Zemzem) is enclosed in a small building, comprising the room of the well, another smaller apartment in which the pitchers are kept, and a staircase leading to the terrace-roof, which is surrounded with a railing, and divided into two parts: one encloses two large horizontal marble sundials, to mark the hours of prayer; the other, which is crowned with a pretty cupola supported by eight pilasters, is a *makam* of the shafeites. The staircase has a separate entrance. The room of the well is rather more than seventeen feet square; it is lined and paved with marble, and lighted by eight windows, three to the west, three to the north, two, with the door, to the east, and three niches towards the store-room. The outside has a small façade of fine white marble. The number of pitchers is immense, occupying not only the room adjoining that of the well, but the two *kobbas*, and several other rooms ranged round the court. They are of unglazed earth, so porous that the water filters through; are fifteen

\* See page 46, note.

inches in length, with a long cylindrical throat, and a body terminating in a point, so that they cannot stand upright. The well itself is about seven feet and a half in diameter, and fifty-six feet deep to the surface of the water. The brim is of fine white marble, five feet high, and is intended to keep off the pilgrims from helping themselves to the water. Three leather buckets, attached to pulleys, serve to draw up the water, which is very limpid, but brackish and heavy. 'Notwithstanding the depth of the well and the heat of the climate, it is hotter, when first drawn up, than the air. It resembles warm water, which proves that there is at the bottom a particular cause of vehement heat. It is wholesome, nevertheless, and so abundant, that, at the period of the pilgrimage, though there were thousands of pitchers-full drawn, its level was not sensibly diminished.

'As soon as a distinguished pilgrim arrives at Mekka, they inscribe his name in the book of the chief of the Zemzem, who orders one of his servants to furnish and to carry water to the house of the pilgrim. The pitchers are marked with the name of the person in black wax; and some mystical inscriptions are usually added. Besides the pitchers which are furnished to the pilgrims, the water-carriers of Zemzem walk continually in the temple, to sell and distribute the water. It is also common, in the evening, for them to spread a very great number of long, narrow mats in the court of the temple, and to place before the mats a row of pitchers half full of water, which are placed obliquely; so that the persons who come to sit upon the mats find each a pitcher before them, which is very agreeable in a warm country, and draws a large concourse of people to the temple before the hour of prayer of *moagreb*, or sunset. It is a period of social union, during which they recite prayers, or talk pleasantly in company until that hour approaches.'

The chief of the Zemzem is a personage of no small consequence. 'As he possesses the entire confidence of the shereef, he fills the most important place. His title is, *the poisoner!* This dangerous man,' says Ali Bey, 'was known to me the first time I went to the well of Zemzem, when he made his court assiduously to me. He gave me a magnificent dinner, and sent me every day two small pitchers of the water of the miraculous well. He even watched the moments when I went to the temple, and ran with the most winning grace and sweetness to present me a handsome cup filled with the same water, which I drank to the last drop, because it would have been considered as a sort of crime or impiety to refuse it. This wretch observes the same conduct to all pashas and important personages who come here. Upon the slightest suspicion, or the least caprice that may arise in the mind of the shereef, he orders, the other obeys, and the unhappy stranger ceases to exist. As it is reckoned impious not to accept the sacred water presented by the chief of the well, this man is arbiter of the lives of every one, and has already sacrificed many victims. For this reason, the Moggrebins, or Arabs of the West, who are entirely devoted to me, hastened to warn me to be upon my guard, on my arrival in the city. I myself treated this traitor with the greatest marks of confidence. I accepted his water and his entertainments with an unalterable serenity and coolness. I took the precaution, however, to keep always in my pocket three doses of vitriolated zinc, (a much more active emetic than tartar-emetic,) to take the instant I should perceive the least indication of treason.' This official assassin is described as a young man, about twenty-two or twenty-four years of age, extremely handsome, with fine eyes: 'he dresses remarkably well, is very polished, has an air of sweetness which is seducing, and appears to be endowed with all the qualities that

render a person amiable.' 'From time immemorial,' we are told, 'the sultan-shereefs of Mekka have had a poisoner at their court; and it is remarkable that they do not try to conceal it, since it is well known in Egypt and at Constantinople, that the divan has several times sent to Mekka pashas, or other persons to be sacrificed in this manner.' The well of Zemzem is believed by the Moslems to have been the one miraculously opened by the angel of the Lord for Hagar, when nearly perishing from thirst in the desert with her son Ishmael.\* Whoever owned the well originally, the devil would seem to be its proprietor now.

*El Bab-es-salem* is an insulated arch, of hewn stone, nineteen feet and a half in breadth, and fifteen feet and a half high, terminating in a point: it stands between the *Makam Ibrahim* and the *Kaaba El Monbar*, the tribune of the imaum on Fridays, is the most highly finished and precious monument of the temple. It stands on one side of the *Makam Ibrahim*, in front of the northern angle of the *Kaaba*. Its form is that of a staircase, about three feet wide, terminating at a small platform, surmounted by an octangular pyramidal cupola of gilt bronze, which rests on four small columns united by arches. The steps are of very fine white marble. The exterior sides, the railing, the base, and the bronze gate at the entrance, are all of beautiful workmanship. Here, as in all the mosques, the imaum does not ascend to the platform, but remains upon the last step but one, with his back towards the *Kaaba*. There is a dress peculiar to the imaum of the temple, consisting of a large *kaftan* of white-wool tissue, and a shawl equally light and white, which covers his head,

\* Gen. xxi, 19. The well to which Hagar was directed was in the wilderness of Beersheba.

passing once round the neck, and falling with the ends before.

The Kaaba is nearly, but not exactly, in the centre of the temple. The ground for about forty feet round it is paved with fine marble, on which the pilgrims perform the *towoaf*, or circuit. Outside of this is a stone pavement about a foot higher, between which and the place of *towoaf*, there are thirty-one pillars of brass, with gilt capitals terminating in a crescent: they are about three inches in diameter, and seven feet six inches high, resting on a stone base about a foot in height and in diameter.\* To these pillars are fastened iron bars, from which are suspended a number of lamps of thick green glass, disposed without order or regularity, which are lighted every evening. Upon the outer pavement are the four *makams* or praying-places of the four orthodox sects. Since the reform of the Wahhabees, however, the order of things has been changed: the imaums of Hanifi and Hanbali say prayers at the foot of the Kaaba, facing the door; the imaum of Shafei at the *makam Ibrahim*; and the imaum of Maleki at his proper place. The morning prayer is conducted by the imaum of Hanbali; those of noon and sunset, by the imaum of Hanifi; the afternoon, by the imaum of Shafei; and that of night, by the Imaum of Maleki.† The two *Kobbas* are opposite the door of the Zemzem: they are about eighteen feet square, and are surmounted with cupolas. That part of the court which

\* 'About fifteen feet high, and twenty feet distant from each other.' — PITTS.

† The Hanifees, according to Pitts, seem the most serious and devout: they are chiefly Turks. The Arabians follow the ritual of Shafei. The Moggrebins, or occidentals, are Malekees. The Hanbalees are distinguished by rejecting Ali from the number of the apostles of Mohammed: in other respects, they differ little from the Hanifees. They are few in number.



is not paved, is of coarse sand. Here are to be seen thousands of blue pigeons, or doves, so tame that they come and feed out of the hands of the *hadjis*, who never fail to buy corn for the purpose; it being a very acceptable offering, Ali Bey says, in the eyes of the Deity *and* those of the shereef. Women and children beset the pilgrim with rush dishes full of corn, which they sell at a *para* each, begging him to bestow something on the *hammamet metta Nebbi*, the pigeons of the prophet.

The door of the Kaaba, as has already been mentioned, is opened only on three days: on the first, all the male pilgrims enter; on the day following, the women go to perform their devotions; and five days after this, a day is set apart to washing and purifying it, in which the sultan assists in person. Ali Bey has given us a description of this strange scene.

‘Two hours after sunrise, the sultan-shereef went to the temple, accompanied by about thirty persons, and twelve Negro and Arabian guards. The door of the Kaaba was already open, and surrounded with an immense number of people. The staircase was not placcd. The sultan-shereef got upon the shoulders and heads of the multitude, and entered with the principal sheikhs of the tribes. Those below wished to do the same; but the guards prevented them, by beating them with their sticks. I staid at a distance from the door, to avoid the crowd, and in a short time received an order from the shereef of the well to advance to the door, where he stood, making signs to me. But how could I get through the crowd that stood between us?

‘All the water-carriers in Mecca were advancing with their vessels full of water, which they passed from hand to hand, until they reached the guards at the door. They also passed a great number of very small brooms, made of the leaves of palm-trees, in the same manner. The negroes began to throw

the water upon the marble pavement of the Kaaba: they also cast rose-water upon it, which, flowing out at a hole under the door, was caught with great avidity by the faithful. But as it did not run out fast enough to satisfy the wants of those at a distance, who were desirous to obtain it, they cried out for some of it to drink, and to wash themselves with: the negroes, with cups, and with their hands, threw it in quantities over them. They were civil enough to pass a small pitcher and a cup full of it to me, of which I drank as much as possible, and poured the rest over myself; for, although this water is very dirty, it is a benediction of God, and is besides much perfumed with rose-water.

‘I at last made an effort to approach: several persons raised me up; and, after walking upon the heads of several others, I arrived at the door, where the negro guards helped me to get in. I was prepared for the operation; for I had on only my shirt, a caschaba, or a shirt of white wool without sleeves, my turban, and the hhaik that covered me.

‘The sultan-shereef swept the hall himself. Immediately after I entered, the guards took off my hhaik, and presented me a bundle of small brooms, some of which I took in each hand; and at the instant they threw a great deal of water upon the pavement, I began my duty by sweeping with both hands, with an ardent faith, although the floor was quite clean, and polished like glass. During this operation, the shereef, who had finished, began to pray. They gave me afterwards a silver cup, filled with a paste made of the saw-dust of sandal wood, kneaded with the essence of roses; and I spread it upon the lower part of the wall, that is incrustated with marble, under the tapestry which covered the walls and the roof; and also a large piece of aloe wood, which I burned in a large chafing-dish, to perfume the hall. After I had finished all these things, the sultan-shereef

proclaimed me *Hhaddem Beit Allah el Haram*, or Servant of the Holy House of God; and I received the congratulations of all the assistants. I recited my prayers in the first three corners, as upon my first entering; and thus entirely completed my duties, whilst I attended to this pious work. The sultan withdrew a short time after.

‘A great number of women, who were in the court at some distance from the door of the Kaaba, uttered from time to time shrill cries of rejoicing. They gave me a small quantity of the sandal wood paste, and two of the small brooms, as interesting relics, which I kept most carefully. The negroes helped me down upon the people, who also assisted me to reach the ground, and addressed compliments of felicitation to me. I then went to the *Makam Ibrahim* to say a prayer. They returned me my *hhaik*; and I went home completely wet.’

Five days after this, they cut that part of the black cloth that surrounded the door and bottom of the building, and distributed it among the pilgrims; and thus was completed the *iaharmo el Beit Allah*, the purification of the House of God. On the same day, Ali Bey had the good fortune to see a part of the Wahhabee army enter Mekka, to fulfil the duties of pilgrimage. ‘But what men!’ he exclaims. ‘You must imagine a crowd of individuals, thronged together, without any other covering than a small piece of cloth round their waist, except some few who had a napkin placed upon the left shoulder, that passed under the right arm; being naked in every other respect, with their matchlocks upon their shoulders, and their *khanjears* or large knives hung to their girdles. All the people fled at the sight of this torrent of men, and left them the whole street to themselves. I determined to keep my post, not being in the least alarmed; and I mounted upon a heap of rubbish to observe them better. I saw a column of them defile,

which appeared to be composed of 5 or 6,000 men, so pressed together in the whole width of the street, that it would not have been possible to move a hand. The column was preceded by three or four horsemen, armed with a lance twelve feet long, and followed by fifteen or twenty men mounted upon horses, camels, and dromedaries, with lances like the others; but they had neither flags, drums, nor any other instrument or military trophy during their march. Some uttered cries of holy joy, others recited prayers in a confused and loud voice. They marched in this manner to the upper part of the town, where they began to file off in parties, to enter the temple by the gate *Bab-es-salem*.

‘A great number of children belonging to the city, who generally serve as guides to strangers, came to meet them, and presented themselves successively to the different parties, to assist them as guides in the sacred ceremonies. I remarked, that among these benevolent guides there was not one man. Already had the first parties begun their turns round the Kaaba, and were pressing towards the black stone to kiss it, when the others, impatient no doubt at being kept waiting, advanced in a tumult, mixing among the first; and confusion being soon at its height, prevented them from hearing the voices of their young guides. Tumult succeeded to confusion. All wishing to kiss the stone, precipitated themselves upon the spot; and many of them made their way with their sticks in their hands. In vain did their chiefs mount the base near the stone, with a view to enforce order: their cries and signs were useless; for the holy zeal for the house of God which devoured them, would not permit them to listen to reason, nor to the voice of their chiefs. The movement of the circle increased by mutual impulse. They resembled at last a swarm of bees, which flutter confusedly

round their hive, circulating rapidly and without order round the Kaaba, and, by their tumultuous pressure, breaking all the lamps which surrounded it, with their guns which they carried upon their shoulders.

‘After the different ceremonies round the house of God, every party ought to have drank and sprinkled themselves with the water of the miraculous well; but they rushed to it in such crowds, and with so much precipitation, that in a few moments the ropes, the buckets, and pulleys were ruined. The chief and those employed at the Zemzem abandoned their post; the Wahhabites alone remained masters of the well; and, giving each other their hands, formed a chain to descend to the bottom, and obtained the water how they could.

‘The well required alms, the house of God offerings, the guides demanded their pay, but the greater part of the Wahhabites had not brought any money with them. They acquitted themselves of this obligation of conscience, by giving twenty or thirty grains of a very coarse powder, small pieces of lead, or some grains of coffee.

‘These ceremonies being finished, they commenced shaving their heads; for they all had hair an inch long. This operation took place in the street; and they paid the barbers in the same coin that they had paid the guides, the officers of the temple, &c.

‘These Wahhabites, who are from Draaïya, the principal place of the reformers, are of a copper colour. They are in general well made, and very well proportioned, but of a short stature. I particularly remarked some of their heads, which were so handsome, that they might have been compared with those of Apollo, Antinous, or the Gladiator. They have very lively eyes, the nose and mouth well formed, fine teeth, and very expressive countenances.



‘When we represent to ourselves a crowd of naked, armed men, without any idea of civilisation, and speaking a barbarous language, the picture terrifies the imagination, and appears disgusting ; but if we overcome this first impression, we find in them some commendable qualities. They never rob either by force or stratagem, except when they know the object belongs to an enemy or an infidel. They pay with their money all their purchases and every service that is rendered them. Being blindly subservient to their chiefs, they support in silence every fatigue, and would allow themselves to be led to the opposite side of the globe. In short, it may be perceived that they are men the most disposed to civilisation, if they were to receive proper instruction.

‘Having returned home, I found that fresh bodies of Wahhabites were continually arriving, to fulfil the duties of their pilgrimage. But what was the conduct of the sultan-shereef during this period ? Being unable to resist these forces, he hid himself, fearing an attack from them. The fortresses were provisioned and prepared for defence ; the Arabian, Turkish, Mogrebin, and Negro soldiers were at their posts ; I saw several guards and sentinels upon the forts ; several gates were walled up ; all was ready, in short, in case of aggression ; but the moderation of the Wahhabites, and the negotiations of the shereef, rendered these precautions useless.’

The city of Mekka, the capital of Hedjaz, and the centre of Islam, is situated in a very narrow valley, winding irregularly between mountains from the N. E. to the S. W., the mean breadth of which is supposed by Ali Bey to be about 155 toises, or between 900 and 1,000 feet. It stands in lat.  $21^{\circ} 28' 9''$  N., long.  $40^{\circ} 15'$  E. of Greenwich. On account of its position, it is impossible to gain a good view of the city. ‘If I went out at either end,’ says Ali Bey, ‘the mountains allowed me to discover only a few

houses ; and if I went out at the sides, I found myself upon the side of the mountains, whence I could perceive nothing but an irregular surface of flat roofs without any perspective.\* In short, it may be considered as an assemblage of a great number of houses, grouped to the north of the temple, prolonging themselves in the form of a crescent from the N. E. to the S. W. by S. It covers a line of 900 toises in length and 266 in breadth at its centre, which extends from east to west. The principal streets are regular enough: they may even be called handsome, on account of the pretty fronts of the houses. They are sanded, level, and very convenient. I had been so long accustomed to live in the indifferent towns of Africa, that I was quite surprised at the fine appearance of the buildings of Mekka.† I think they approach the Indian or Persian taste, which introduced itself during the time of the siege by the Khalif of Bagdadt. They have two rows of windows, as at Cyprus, with balconies covered with blinds. There are even several large windows quite open, as in Europe ; but the greater number are covered with a curtain like a Venetian blind, made of palm-tree. They are extremely light, and screen the apartments from the sun, without interrupting the passage of the air. They fold up at pleasure at the upper part. The houses are solidly built with stone : they are three and four stories high, and

\* The view of Mekka given by M. Ohsson in the ‘Picture of the Ottoman Empire,’ is pronounced to be ‘no longer like that city,’ if it is not rather a picture of the imagination.

† Pitts speaks of the buildings, however, in terms of depreciation. ‘It is a place,’ he says, ‘of no force, wanting both walls and gates. Its buildings are very ordinary, insomuch that it would be a place of no tolerable entertainment, were it not for the anniversary resort of so many thousand *hajjes* or pilgrims, on whose coming the whole dependence of the town in a manner is; for many shops are scarcely open all the year besides.’

sometimes even more. The fronts are ornamented with bases, mouldings, and paintings, which give them a very graceful appearance. It is very rare to find a door that has not a base with steps and small seats on both sides. The blinds of the balconies are not very close; and holes are cut besides in different parts of them. The roofs form terraces, surrounded with a wall about seven feet high, open at certain spaces, which are occupied by a railing of red and white bricks placed symmetrically, leaving holes for the circulation of the air. All the staircases are narrow, dark, and steep. The rooms are well proportioned, long, broad, and lofty, and have, besides the large windows and balconies, a second row of smaller windows. The beauty of the houses may be considered as the remains of the ancient splendour of Mekka. Every inhabitant has an interest in preserving his dwelling, to invite and excite the pilgrims to lodge with him; because it is one of his principal resources, on account of the terms demanded, and other additional benefits.

‘Mekka is an open city without walls upon any of its sides. It has a fortress upon *Djebel Djiad*, which, in regard to the tactics of this people, might be looked upon as a second Gibraltar. It presents, however, nothing but a monstrous assemblage of walls and towers, and appears to have been constructed at different periods, without order, and after an incoherent plan. It is the principal fortress of the shereef, who has also two others, very ancient, which are flat, and of the form of a parallelogram, with a tower at each angle: they are situated upon the northern and southern mountains. The barracks of the Mogrebin and Negro soldiers of the shereef, situated without the city upon the road to Arafat, are also flanked by towers; but their position, at the bottom of a valley, and at the foot of a mountain, renders

them incapable of defence. There are several insulated towers in the windings of the valley, which are capable of containing a small guard only. The centre of the city may be said to be circumscribed and surrounded by four principal mountains; viz. *Djebel Kubis* to the east, *Djebel Djiad* to the south, *Djebel Omar* to the west, and *Djebel Hindi* to the north. These mountains are not very high. They are composed of quartz with a small portion of hornblende. The sand is quartz pulverised; and although there are some veins of hornblende, feldspath, mica, and schorl to be found among the mountains, yet, quartz forms in general the principal mass. There are some veins of sulphur which they work.' 'The climate of Mekka is torrid, not only on account of its geographical latitude, but particularly its topographical position in the middle of mountains. The greatest heat I observed during my stay, was  $23^{\circ} 30'$  of Reaumur, on the 5th of February at sunset, and the least,  $16^{\circ}$ , on the 16th of the same month, at seven o'clock in the morning. During the time that I was at Mekka, the sky was alternately serene and cloudy, as in temperate climates; but I did not remark the abrupt and terrible changes in the temperature, from dry to humid, which I witnessed at Djidda. The climate appears wholesome, for there are not many sick of chronical complaints there; but, to compensate for this, there are not many old men to be seen; few, at least, of a very advanced age. Some are blind, but none with the ophthalmia, so common in Egypt. It may be imagined how great must be the heat of summer, when, in the month of January, with the windows open, I could scarcely endure the sheet of the bed upon me; and the butter, at the same period, was always liquid like water. Situated at the bottom of a sandy valley, surrounded on all sides by naked mountains, without river, brook, or any running water, without trees, plants, or any vegetation, an idea may



be formed of the heat which reigns during summer. The aridity of the country is said to be such, that there is hardly a plant to be seen near the city or upon the neighbouring mountains. The markets are well supplied with provisions, but they all are brought from a distance, and are proportionably dear. Flour is imported from Egypt, vegetables and rice from India, herbs, &c, from Tayif. All the productions of India and Persia, natural as well as artificial, may be bought here.' But 'we must not expect to find at Mekka any thing like a meadow, still less a garden. They do not sow grain, for the too ungrateful soil would not produce any plant to the cultivator. There are but three or four trees upon the spot where formerly stood the house of Abu Taleb, and six or eight others, scattered here and there. These trees are prickly, and produce a small fruit similar to that of the *jujube* or *nebbek*.' 'I never saw but one flower,' says Ali Bey, 'during the whole of my stay at Mekka, which was upon the way to Arafat. I ordered my servant to cut it and bring it to me ; but he was perceived by the pilgrims, who ran immediately to him, saying, that it was a sin to pluck up or cut any plant during the pilgrimage to that place. I was therefore obliged to renounce the idea of obtaining the only flower I had seen.'

The rain water which is brought from the neighbouring mountains, is good: the price is two Turkish piasters per camel-load. The well water, though a little heavy and brackish, is drinkable, and the lower class never drink any other. All the wells are of the same depth, and the water is so precisely of the same temperature, taste, and clearness as that of the *Zemzem*, that Ali Bey expresses his conviction, that the water which supplies them all is one sheet, about fifty-five feet below the surface, the quantity of which is owing to the filtration of rain water, and the brackish taste derived from the decomposition of the saline



particles mixed with the soil. Hence, he observes, with more than Mohammedan *naïveté*, ‘as they have the same qualities, and spring from the same source as the water of Zemzem, they have the same virtue in drawing down the Divine favour and blessing as the miraculous well.’

There are few dogs, we are told, and few insects in the holy city, — a remarkable circumstance in a Mohammedan town, under a tropical latitude. Nay, Ali Bey affirms, that ‘bugs and fleas are scarce,’ although he was sure to catch certain other vermin on those days when there were great assemblages at the temple. He perceived but very few gnats, but there are a great many common flies, and he saw, in the court of the temple, one very large scorpion. The number of pigeons is immense, and that of mice, of the European kind, equally great. He never saw, he says, any mice so bold as those of Mekka. They danced and leaped upon him in his bed every night, would stare him in the face, and once, when he had neglected to wash some balm of juniper off his hand, bit his fingers severely while he slept. There are cats here of the European species, only a little smaller: whether their number is too inconsiderable to keep the mice under, or whether they are in league with the vermin, we are not informed. Notwithstanding the heat of the climate, and the scarcity of water, sheep, goats, oxen, and cows are brought to Mekka. Ali Bey saw a very fine species of cow, without horns, and with a hump on its back, which, he was told, travels with celerity, and gives a great deal of milk. There is a very large and pretty species of goat, with horns more than twenty-four inches in length.

‘Mekka not being situated,’ observes Ali Bey, ‘in the route to any country of consequence, nature has not designed it as a place of commerce, placed as it is in the middle of an extremely barren desert,

which prevents its inhabitants from being either husbandmen or shepherds. What resources then remain to them for subsistence? The force of arms, to oblige other countries to give them a part of their productions, or religious enthusiasm, to induce strangers to come and bring money to them, with which they may procure the necessaries of life.

‘In the time of the khalifs, these two causes united, rendered Mekka an opulent city; but before and since that glorious period, it has had no other resource for its support than the religious enthusiasm of the pilgrims, which unfortunately begins to cool from day to day, through the effects of time, distance of place, and revolutions, that reduce this place to a mean and precarious existence. Such is its state at this moment, and such was it before the mission of the Prophet.

‘Mekka has always been the centre of the religious enthusiasm of different nations. The origin of pilgrimages, and the first foundation of its temple, are lost in the obscurity of ages, since they appear to be anterior to the period of history. The Prophet pulled down the idols which profaned the house of God. The Koran confirmed the pilgrimage; and it is in this manner that the devotion of other nations has been in all times the basis of the subsistence of the inhabitants of Mekka. But, as this could not alone suffice, they were very poor before the coming of the Prophet; and now, after a short reign of glory and riches acquired by arms, it has relapsed into poverty. How then can we hope to see the arts and sciences flourish? Separated by its situation from all commercial intercourse, it remains immersed in the most profound ignorance of all news, discoveries, revolutions, and the actions of other men. Hence it is that the people of Mekka will remain in stupidity and the grossest darkness, notwithstanding the concourse of strangers, who only remain there during the time absolutely neces-

sary to fulfil the duties of their pilgrimage, to make some few commercial exchanges, and then prepare for their return to their own country. Thus, Mekka is so poor by nature, that if the house of God ceased to exist, it would be inevitably deserted in two years, or at least reduced to a simple *douar* or hamlet; for the inhabitants in general subsist for the rest of the year upon what they accumulate during the time of the pilgrimage. At that period, the place puts on a lively appearance, commerce is animated, and half of the people are transformed into hosts, merchants, porters, servants, &c; and the other, attached entirely to the service of the temple, live upon the alms and gifts of the pilgrims. Such are their resources. Deplorable opulence! which has stamped upon their countenances the mark of the extreme misery that surrounds them.

‘An Arab is by nature generally thin; but those of Mekka, and, above all, those that serve in the temple, seem absolutely walking skeletons, clothed with a parchment that covers their bones. I must own, I was struck with astonishment when I saw them for the first time upon my arrival. What I have advanced may be perhaps considered as an exaggeration; but I protest to the truth of my assertions; and may also add, that it is impossible, without seeing them, to form an idea of an assemblage of such lean and scraggy-looking men as all of them are, with the exception of the chief of Zemzem, who is the only person that is at all lusty, and two or three eunuchs, a little less thin than the others. It appears even impossible that these skeletons, or shadows, should be able to stand so long as they do, when we reflect upon their large, sunken eyes, slender noses, cheeks hollow to the bones, legs and arms absolutely shrivelled up, ribs, veins, and nerves, in no better state; and the whole of their frame so wasted, that they might be mistaken

for true anatomical models.\* Such is the frightful appearance of these unhappy creatures, that it is painful to be obliged to look at them. This is the existence which these servants of the temple enjoy; but the pleasures which await them in paradise, are preferable to all the riches of the earth.

‘There are no people more dull and melancholy than these. I never once heard the sound of a musical instrument or song during the whole of my stay, that was executed by a man; but my ears were struck once or twice by the songs of some women, which I set to music. Plunged in a continual melancholy, the least contradiction irritates them; and the few slaves they have, are the most unhappy and wretched of all the Mussulman slaves, in consequence of the bad treatment they experience. I heard, in the house I lived in, a master beat his slave with a bastinado during a quarter of an hour. He stopped every three or four minutes to allow his arm to rest, and then recommenced with new force.

‘It may be deduced from these observations, that the population of Mekkka diminishes sensibly. This city, which is known to have contained more than 100,000 souls, does not at present shelter more than from 16 to 18,000. There are some quarters of the suburbs entirely abandoned and in ruins; nearly two-thirds of the houses that remain are empty; and the greater part of those that are inhabited, are decaying within, notwithstanding the solidity of their construction, the fronts alone being kept in good order, to attract the pilgrims. In consequence of the inattention that is paid to repairs, the houses are falling down; and if there are no new ones erected, (and I saw only one that was advancing slowly in the whole town,) it will be reduced, in the course of a century, to the tenth part of the size it now is.’

\* ‘The people here,’ says Pitts, ‘are a poor sort of people, very thin, lean, and swarthy.’

The little commerce that now exists at Mekka, is confined to the caravans that arrive at the time of the pilgrimage. Formerly, besides the grand Syrian hadji, the Egyptian, and the Mogrebin, another caravan came from Bagdadt, attended by a great number of Persian pilgrims, a smaller one was made up of pilgrims from Lachsa, Bahhreïn, and Nedjed, a sixth came from Oman, a seventh from Yemen, and numbers of pilgrims arrived by sea from Persia, Hindostan, Java, Sumatra, and the Arabian colonies on the African coast. But all these have greatly declined; and the consumption of the city constantly diminishes, owing to the diminution in the funds which are supplied by the arrival of the pilgrims. 'Formerly,' says Ali Bey, 'the numerous caravans which arrived from all quarters of the globe where the religion of Islamism was practised, provided for all the wants of the city, by the abundance of alms which they left; but now that the number is diminished, and the pilgrims are not in a state to contribute to the expenses, the number of persons employed being always the same, devotion and the practice of religion are become very dear, because those employed attach themselves to the pilgrim whom they believe to be rich; so that he cannot quit without leaving 1,500 or 2000 francs in alms and remuneration to them and the temple. There are not any of the pilgrims, even the poorest, who undertake the journey at the expense of public charity, or who beg their way, that are not obliged to leave some crowns.

'The caravans also brought large gifts from their respective countries on the part of their countrymen, but there comes hardly any thing now. The chief of the country, too, used to contribute a part of their subsistence, but, being now impoverished by the revolution of the Wahhabees, far from giving, he takes all that he can get.'

The moral state of the population corresponds to



that of other holy cities. As the Christians at Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth are said to be worse than other Christians, so are the Mohammedans of Mekka worse than other Moslems. 'Though this place,' says Pitts, 'is esteemed so very holy, yet, it comes short of none for lewdness and debauchery. As for uncleanness, it is equal to Grand Cairo; and they will steal even in the temple itself.' Ali Bey gives a similar account of the state of things.

'The women enjoy more liberty at Mekka than in any other Mussulman city. Perhaps the great concourse of strangers who arrived when the city was in its greatest opulence, contributed to change their manners; and their misery and natural dullness have tended to plunge them into an almost total indifference in this respect. It is an indubitable fact, that opulence and poverty are extremes equally opposite to the preservation of manners.

'The women cover their faces, as in Egypt, with a piece of cloth, in which there are two holes worked for the eyes, which are so large that half their face may be seen; and a few show nearly the whole. They all wear a sort of cloak made of blue and white striped linen, as at Alexandria, which is put on with much grace; but, when a sight of their faces is obtained, the illusion is soon dispelled; for they are in general very ugly, with lemon-coloured complexions, like the men. Their faces and their hands, which are daubed all over with black, blue, and yellow, present a frightful picture to strangers; but custom has made them consider this painting as a sign of beauty. I saw some who had a ring passed through the cartilage of the nose, which hung down upon their upper lip.

'Their freedom is such, in comparison with Mussulman manners in general, that I may almost call it effrontery. I saw several of those that lived in the neighbouring houses present themselves continually

at the windows, and some of them entirely undressed. A lady who occupied the upper story of the house in which I lived, used to make me a thousand courtesies and compliments, with her face completely uncovered, every time I went upon the terrace to make my astronomical observations; and I began to suspect that the women themselves might perhaps be a branch of the speculation of their poor husbands.

‘All the women I saw, had a great deal of grace, and very fine eyes; but their hollow cheeks, painted of a greenish yellow, gave them the appearance of having the jaundice. Their noses are regular, but they have large mouths. They speak very well, and express themselves with great feeling. They engrave indelible drawings upon their skin, and stain their eyelids black, their teeth yellow, and their lips, feet, and hands, of a red tile colour, like the Egyptians, and with the same materials.

‘Their dress consists of an immense pantaloon, that descends into their slippers, or half boots, of yellow leather, and is composed of Indian striped cotton. The poorer sort wear them of blue cloth. They have, besides, a shift of a size and form the most extravagant. It is composed of two square cloths, six feet long and five broad, which are united at the upper part, except an opening in the middle, to pass the head through. The lower corners are cut out about seven inches, like the segment of a circle; so that what was before an angle becomes a hollow slope. These slopes are both sewed; but the lower part and the sides remain open from top to bottom. The rich wear these shifts made of slight, striped silk tissue, as fine as gauze, which comes from Egypt, and gather them in plaits on each side upon the shoulders, binding them round the waist with a belt. Above these they wear a caftan of India cotton. I never saw them wear any other ornament upon the head than a handkerchief; but they put rings and

bracelets upon their hands, arms, legs, and feet, like the women in other Mussulman countries.

‘The Bedouin women, or those that live in the interior of the country, and appear to be of the highest rank, have for their only costume, a large shift of blue stuff; a cloth of a coquelicot colour upon their faces; a very large cloak, or black veil, of wool; some rings, bracelets, and a few other jewels.

‘The costume of the men at Mekka is, as in Egypt, composed of a benish, or exterior caftan, bound with a belt, a shirt, drawers, and babouches, or slippers; but this is the dress of persons in place, merchants, and those employed about the temple, &c. The lower people have hardly ever more than a shirt and drawers.

‘The Bedouin Arab wears commonly a large cloak without sleeves over his tunie, made of a tissue of coarse wool, or of a slight cloth, both sides of which are alike, and commonly with alternate stripes of brown and white, each a foot broad.

‘The inhabitants of the city wear red caps and turbans; but the Bedouins do not: they cover their heads with a handkerchief, striped yellow, red, and black, folded diagonally in the form of a triangle, and simply thrown upon the head; so that two of the angular points fall before the shoulders, and the other behind the neck upon the back. Those that are rich wear a piece of muslin twisted round the head, above the handkerchief, in the form of a turban; but the poor go almost naked.

‘With the exception of those employed about the temple, and a small number of merehanis, the people go always armed. The arms that are most common are, the large curved knife, halbert, lance, mace, and some few guns. The knives have sheaths of a most singular form; for, independent of the space occupied by the blade, it is prolonged about a foot, in a semi-circular form, and terminated by a ball, or some

other ornament, more or less carved. It is hung obliquely before the body, the handle towards the left side, with the point upwards; so that the movement of the right arm is greatly impeded by this position, which is maintained by force of eustom. So true is it, that men of all ranks and countries are subject to the caprices of fashion.

‘The halberts are composed of a stick, from four feet and a half to five feet long, armed at the top with an iron point, and very commonly with a smaller one at the bottom. The upper one is always more than a foot long, and is differently formed; sometimes broad and narrow; at other times, like a lance or bayonet. The handles are often ornamented with small nails and rings of brass from top to bottom. The mace is formed of a stick two feet long, and about fifteen lines in diameter, terminated by a ball or globe of the same wood, about thirty lines in diameter. Some maces are of iron. Of the guns there are but few, and the greater part are heavy matchlocks, rudely formed. There are some, however, that are well made and very elegant. I have one inlaid with ivory, which cost 120 franes.

‘Some Arabs carry axes, nearly two feet long; and others go armed with a stick, five feet long and two inches thick, with an iron point at the bottom of it.

‘The horsemen carry a lance ten feet and a half long, ornamented with a tuft of black feathers at the jointing of iron, the other end being also armed with a small point, which the bearer sticks perpendicularly in the ground when he alights.

‘I saw some Arabs of Yemen armed with a sword and shield: the former was straight and broad; the latter of metal, hard wood, or the skin of the hippopotamus, (those of the latter substance were the best,) and all were ornamented with carvings. They were about a foot broad.

‘The people of the country assured me, that the ceremonies of marriages and births were not accompanied by any feasts or rejoicings, as in other countries; and I myself did not see any celebrated. Interments take place without any ceremony. They carry the body to the foot of the Kaaba, where the faithful who are present repeat a short prayer for the deceased after the ordinary canonical prayer; and they carry away the corpse to bury it in a ditch outside the town. There are a number of hand-barrows for this purpose before one of the doors of the temple, in the public path; one of which is engaged by the family of the deceased, who place the body upon it, dressed in its ordinary habit, without the least ornament, or even the covering of a pall. After the interment, they bring the barrow to the place from whence they took it.

‘I remarked, that in all Arabia, it is customary to make three perpendicular incisions upon each cheek; in consequence of which, the greater part of the men are adorned with this fine mark, that is to say, six large scars. Having inquired of many persons the object of this custom, I was informed by some, that it was to make themselves bleed, and by others, that it was a mark by which they declared themselves slaves of the house of God. But the truth is, that it is fashion which recommends this sacrifice; and they look upon it as a beauty, equal to the blue, red, and black paintings, or the nose-rings of the women, or their own knives, which impede all their movements. Such is man!

‘I believe there is no Mussulman city where the arts are so little known as at Mekka. There is not a man to be found that is capable of making a lock or forging a key. All the doors are locked with large wooden keys, and the trunks and cases with padlocks brought from Europe: I, therefore, was unable to



replacce the key of a trunk, and that of my telescope-box, which were stolen at Mina.

‘The slippers and sandals are brought from Constantinople and Egypt; for they know not how to make them at Mekkka, except, indced, those of wood or untanned leather, which are very bad.

‘There is not a single man to be found who knows how to engrave an inscription, or any kind of design upon a hewn stone, as formerly; nor a single gunsmith or cutler able to make a screw, or to replace a piece of the lock of a European gun; those of the country being able to manufacture only their rude matchlocks, their bent knives, lanees, and halberds. Wherever they go, there shop is fitted up in a moment: all that is wanted for this purpose is, a hole made in the ground, which serves as a furnaee; one or two goat-skins, which one of them waves before the fire, serve them for bellows: two or three palm-leaves and four stieks form the walls and the roof of the work-shop, the situation of which they change whenever oecasion requirs.

‘There is no want of braziers for vessels in eopper, but the original article comes from foreign manufactories. There are also tinmen, who make a kind of vase, which the pilgrims use to carry away some of the water of Zemzem. I discovered also a bad engraver of brass seals.

‘The scienees are found in the same state of perfection as the arts at Mekka. The whole knowledge of the inhabitants is confined to reading the Koran, and to writing very badly. They learn from their infaney the prayers and the eeremonies of the pilgrimage to the house of God, to Saffa, and to Meroua, in order to be able at an early age to gain money by officiating as guides to the pilgrims. Children of five or six years old are to be seen fulfilling these functions, carried upon the arms or shoulders of the pilgrims, who repeat, word for word, the prayers

which the children recite at the same time that they follow the path pointed out by them to the different places.

‘I wished to obtain a Koran written at Mekka, but copies are not numerous; and they are so badly written and so full of errors, that they cannot be of any use. There are no regular schools, if we except those where they learn to read and write. In short, there are only a few *talbes*, or doctors, who, through caprice, vanity, or covetousness of obtaining something from their auditors, go and sit under the porticos of the temple, where they begin to read in a loud voice. This draws a crowd of persons, who generally assemble pretty quickly, and arrange themselves round the doctor, who explains, reads, or preaches, whichever he can do, and they go away or stay as they please. Such is the education of the people of this holy city, who are the most ignorant of mortals. It is true that their geographical situation contributes to it in a great measure.

‘Mekka and Medinah are the cradles of the Arabic language; but this, in consequence of the general ignorance, is degraded and changed, even in the pronunciation, to such a degree, that it is written without vowels, and has a great number of aspirations, which every one varies according to his pleasure. This arises from a want of a national prosody and of the means to preserve and perpetuate the primitive sounds; so that, far from increasing in excellence, it is corrupted every day by the vicious expressions peculiar to each tribe, and by their intercourse with strangers.’

Such is Mekka; and the time can hardly be very distant when it must be said, such Mekka was! Islamism has received a wound at its very core and centre, from which it will never recover. The fanaticism of the Wahhabecs has for the present saved the Kaaba from destruction; but some of the most

attractive objects of pilgrimage no longer exist. The house where the Prophet was born; the house of his uncle Abu Taleb, where he passed part of his life; the chapels, or sepulchres, of Fatima, Mohammed's daughter, and other 'saints;' the chapel on the top of the mountain of light;\* and other sacred places, no longer exist. 'The Wahhabees have abolished all, and the pilgrims are consequently deprived,' says Ali Bey, 'of the spiritual merit which they would have acquired by making their pious visits to these holy places; and the good inhabitants of the holy city have lost the temporal wealth which resulted from these acts of devotion.'

There is, however, another principal object of pilgrimage which remains to be mentioned, — Mount Arafat, upon which Adam met his wife after a separation of two hundred years, and where he built the chapel now standing, before he left Hedjaz, and retired with Eve into the island of Ceylon.† 'Several doctors assert,' says Ali Bey, 'that if the *Beit-Allah* ceased to exist, the pilgrimage to Mount Arafat would be completely meritorious, and would produce *the same* degree of satisfaction: this is *my* opinion likewise.'

The 17th of February was the day fixed for this pil-

\* The summit of *El Djebel Nor* (the mountain of light) is fabled to have been the spot on which Mohammed received the first chapter of the Koran from the hands of the angel Gabriel. It rises above the neighbouring mountains in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and was formerly ascended by steps cut in the mountain, till Ab ul Wahhab destroyed the chapel, and placed a guard at the foot of the mountain to prevent its being visited, declaring it to be a superstitious practice!

† See Sale's Koran, c. ii, and notes. Ali Bey says, the mountain was on this account named by Adam, Arafat, *i. e.* gratitude. That Adam spoke Arabic, who can disprove? But other Mohammedan authorities interpret the word as signifying knowledge.

grimage, and at two o'clock on the preceding day, our Hadji left the city in his *shevria*, placed on a camel. About four o'clock, having passed through the long, straggling town of Mina (or Muna), he encamped on the eastern side. This town is composed of a single street, so long that it occupied twenty minutes to pass through it. There are several handsome houses in it, but the greater number are without roofs and in ruins. There are several stone huts, about five feet high, which they let to pilgrims during Easter. The first thing which the traveller sees on entering the town, is a fountain, 'in front of which is an ancient edifice said to have been built by the devil.' The town lies in a valley, enclosed by bare granite mountains. Here Ali Bey was soon followed by a detachment of Wahhabees, mounted upon dromedaries, who encamped also before the doors of the mosque. They were soon joined by others, and in a short time the plain was covered. About sunset, Sâoud himself, the Wahhabite sultan, arrived, and his tents were pitched at a short distance. The caravan from Damascus had been interecepted and turned back by the Wahhabees, for violating the prohibition issued by Sâoud against bringing the mahmal;\* but a caravan from Tripoli in Barbary, another from Yemen, a great number of Negro pilgrims from Soudan and Abyssinia, several hundred Turks from Suez, a great many Mogrebins who had come by sea, Arabs from Upper and Lower Egypt, a caravan from Bassora, others from the East, and the Wahhabees, — were all now assembled in this little plain, where the pilgrims are obliged to encamp, because tradition relates, that Mohammed always encamped here in his way to Arafat. At six o'clock the next morning, the whole camp set out in a direction S. E. by E., and after traversing two valleys, connected by a narrow defile, arrived by nine at the

\* See p. 101.

foot of the mount. *Djebel Arafat* (or *El Orfat*) is a hill of granite rock, about 150 feet high, situated at the foot of a higher mountain to the E. S. E., in a plain about three quarters of a league in diameter, enclosed by barren mountains. Its base is encompassed with a wall, and on its summit is (if not destroyed by the Wahhabees) a chapel, or small building covered with a cupola. It is ascended by steps, partly cut in the rock and partly composed of masonry. Ali Bey did not ascend the top, but, according to the ritual of the Maleki, recited his prayers half-way up. Near the mountain are fourteen large basins, or cisterns, furnishing abundance of good water, which serves the pilgrims both for drink and for bathing with. According to the representation of the mount given by Ali Bey, it has very much the appearance of being an artificial eminence, or of having at least received its shape from art; and its general character forcibly recalls the pyramid of Cholula in Mexico. There can be no doubt that this pilgrimage is the relic of a superstition of far higher antiquity than the foundation of Mohammedism, and the origin of which is now lost. The manner in which it is adverted to in the Koran, clearly indicates that it was an observance of long standing. 'It is here,' says Ali Bey, 'that the grand spectacle of the pilgrimage of the Moslems must be seen, — an innumerable crowd of men from all nations, and of all colours, coming from the extremities of the earth, through a thousand dangers, and encountering fatigues of every description, to adore together the same God. The native of Circassia here presents his hand in a friendly manner to the Ethiopian or the Negro of Guinea; the Indian and the Persian embrace the inhabitant of Barbary and Morocco; all looking upon each other as brothers or individuals of the same family, united by the bands of religion, and the greater part speaking or understanding, more or



less, the same language, the language of Arabia.\* The ritual commands, that after having repeated the afternoon prayer, which we did in our tents, we should repair to the foot of the mountain, and wait there the setting of the sun. The Wahhabites, who were encamped at great distances, with a view to obey this precept, began to approach, having at their head the Sultan Sâaoud, and Abounocta their second chief; and in a short time I saw an army of 45,000 men pass before me, almost all of whom were mounted upon camels and dromedaries, with a thousand camels carrying water, tents, firewood, and dry grass for the camels of their chiefs. A body of 200 men on horseback carried colours of different kinds, fixed upon lances. This cavalry, I was informed, belonged to Abounocta. There were also eight or ten colours among the camels, but without any other customary

\* 'I do confess,' says Pitts, describing this remarkable scene, 'the number of *hagges* I saw at this mountain, was very great; nevertheless I cannot think they could amount to so many as 70,000.' The belief of the Moslems is, that if any short of that number were assembled on this occasion, God would make up the deficiency by angels! 'It was a sight, indeed,' he adds, 'able to pierce one's heart, to behold so many thousands in their garments of humility and mortification, with their naked heads, and cheeks watered with tears, and to hear their grievous sighs and sobs, begging earnestly for the remission of their sins, promising newness of life, using a form of penitential expressions; and thus continuing for the space of four or five hours, viz, until the time of *Aksham-nomas*, which is to be performed about half an hour after sunset. It is matter of sorrowful reflection, to compare the indifference of many Christians with this zeal of those poor blind Mohammedans, who will, 'tis to be feared, rise up in judgment against them, and condemn them. After their solemn performance of their devotions thus at the Djibbel, they all at once receive that honourable title of *hagge* from the Emaun or Iman, and are so styled to their dying day. Immediately upon their receiving this name, the trumpet is sounded, and they leave the hill, and return for Mekka.'

appendage. All this body of men, entirely naked, marched in the same order that I have formerly remarked.

‘It was impossible for me exactly to distinguish the Sultan and the second chief, for they were naked as well as the rest. However, I believe that a venerable old man, with a long white beard, who was preceded by the royal standard, was Sâaoud. This standard was green, and had, as a mark of distinction, the profession of his faith, *La illaha ila Allah*, “There is no other god but God,” embroidered upon it in large white characters.

‘I distinguished perfectly one of Sâaoud’s sons, a boy about seven or eight years old, with long and floating hair. He was brown like the rest, and dressed in a large white shirt. He was mounted on a superb white horse, upon a sort of pannel, without stirrups, according to their custom, for they are not acquainted with any other kind of saddle, and was escorted by a chosen troop. The pannel was covered with a red cloth richly embroidered, and spangled with gold stars.

‘The mountain and its environs were soon covered with Wahhabites. The caravans and detached pilgrims afterwards approached it. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of my people, I penetrated among the Wahhabites to their centre, to be able to obtain a nearer view of the Sultan; but several of them with whom I conversed, assured me that this was impossible, since the apprehension of a similar death to that which occurred to the unfortunate Abdelaaziz, who was assassinated, had occasioned Sâaoud to multiply the number of his guard.

‘I must allow that I discerned much reason and moderation among the Wahhabites to whom I spoke, and from whom I obtained the greater part of the information which I have given concerning their nation. However, notwithstanding this moderation,

neither the natives of the country nor the pilgrims could hear their name pronounced without trembling, and never pronounced it themselves but in murmurs. Thus they flee from them as much as possible, and shun conversation with them; in consequence of which, I had to encounter and overcome the different scruples of my people, who surrounded me whenever I wished to converse with any of them.

‘The sultan-shereef had sent, according to annual custom, a part of his troops, with four small pieces of artillery. It was reported even that he would come in person, but I did not see him. It is customary also, that an imaum of the shereef should come every year and preach a sermon upon the mountain. The one that came this day, was sent back by Sâaoud before he commenced, and one of his own imaums preached in his stead; but I was too far off to be able to hear any thing. The sermon being over, I observed the Wahhabites make signs of approbation; and they cried outrageously.

‘I could easily have found means to introduce myself to the Sultan Sâaoud, which I very much desired, so that I might have known him perfectly; but, as it would have compromised me with the sultan-shereef, who would have attributed this simple action of curiosity to some political motive, I abstained from effecting it.

‘We waited upon the mountain for the period of the sun’s setting. The instant it occurred, what a tremendous noise! Let us imagine an assemblage of 80,000 men, 2,000 women, and 1,000 little children, 60 or 70,000 camels, asses, and horses, which, at the commencement of night, began to move at a quick pace along a narrow valley, according to the ritual, marching one after the other, in a cloud of sand, and delayed by a forest of lances, guns, swords, &c; in short, forcing their passage as they could. Pressed and hurried on by those behind, we took only an

hour and a half to return to Mosdelifa, notwithstanding it had taken us more than two hours to arrive in the morning. The motive of this precipitation, ordered by the ritual, is, that the prayer of the setting sun, or Moagreb, ought not to be said at Arafat, but at Mosdelifa, at the same time as the night prayer, or *aksha*, which ought to be said at the last moment of twilight, that is, an hour and a half after sunset. These prayers are repeated by each group or family privately. We hastened to see them upon our arrival, before we pitched our tents; and the day was terminated by mutual felicitations upon the happiness of our sanctification by the pilgrimage to the mount.

‘We set out the next day, Wednesday, 18th February, 10th of the month Doulhajea, and the first day of Easter, at five o’clock in the morning, to go to encamp at Mina.

‘We alighted immediately after our arrival, and went precipitately to the house of the devil, which is facing the fountain. We had each seven small stones of the size of gray peas, which we had picked up expressly, the evening before at Mosdelifa, to throw against the house of the devil. Mussulmans of the rite of Maleki, like myself, throw them one after the other, pronouncing after every one these words, *Bism illah Allahu ak’bar*; which, interpreted, are ‘In the name of God, the very great God.’ As the devil has had the malice to build his house in a very narrow place, not above thirty-four feet broad, occupied also in part by rocks, which it was requisite to climb to make sure of our aim when we threw the stones over the wall that surrounded it, and as the pilgrims all desired to perform this ceremony immediately upon their arrival, there was a most terrible confusion. However, I soon succeeded in accomplishing this holy duty, through the aid of my people; but I came off with two wounds in my left leg. I retired afterwards

to my tent, to repose myself after these fatigues. The Wahhabites came and threw their little stones also, because the Prophct used to do so. We offered up the Paschal sacrifice this day.

‘ I must praise the moderation and good order which reigned amidst this number of individuals, belonging to different nations. Two thousand women who were among them, did not occasion the least disorder; and though there were more than 40 or 50,000 guns, there was only one let off, which happened near me. At the same instance, one of the chiefs ran to the man who had fired, and reprimanded him, saying, “ Why did you do this? are we going to make war here?” ’

Mina is the place where Abraham is said to have gone to offer up his son Isaac, and here, therefore, the Moslems sacrifice their sheep. A stone or rock was shown to Joseph Pitts, cloven in the middle, the effect, as he was told, of the stroke intended by Abraham for his son, but which was miraculously warded off! Here the pilgrims are required to spend the time of *Kurbaen byram*, viz, three days; although Mohammed appears to have introduced a relaxation of this law.\* Pitts gives the following account of the ceremonies here practised. ‘ As soon as their tents are pitched, and all things orderly disposed, every individual *hagge*, the first day, goes and throws seven of the small stones, which they had gathered, against a small pillar, or little square stone building: which action of theirs is intended to testify their defiance of the devil and his deeds; for they at the same time pronounce the following words, viz, *Erzum le Shetane wazbehe*, i. e. Stone the devil and them that please him. And there are two other

\* ‘ Remember God the appointed number of days; but if any haste to depart from the valley of Mina in two days, it shall be no crime in him,’ — Chap. ii.



of the like pillars, which are situated near one another ; at each of which (I mean all three), the second day, they throw seven stones ; and the same they do the third day. As I was going to perform this ceremony of throwing the stones, a facetious *hagge* met me ; saith he, “ You may save your labour at present, if you please, for I have hit out the devil’s eyes already.” ’

‘ You must observe, that after they have thrown the seven stones on the first day, (the country people having brought great flocks of sheep to be sold,) every one buys a sheep and sacrifices it ; some of which they give to their friends, some to the poor which come out of Mekka and the country adjacent, very ragged poor, and the rest they eat themselves ; after which, they shave their heads, throw off *hirrawem*, and put on other clothes, and then salute one another with a kiss, saying, *Byram Mabarick Ela*, i. e. The feast be a blessing to you.

‘ These three days of Byram they spend festively, rejoicing, with abundance of illuminations all night, shooting of guns, and fireworks flying in the air ; for they reckon that all their sins are now done away, and they shall, when they die, go directly to heaven, if they do not apostatise ; and that for the future, if they keep their vow and do well, God will set down for every good action ten ; but if they do ill, God will likewise reckon every evil action ten : and any person who, after having received the title of *hagge*, shall fall back to a vicious course of life, is esteemed to be very vile and infamous by them.

‘ During their three days’ stay at Mina, scarcely any *hagge* (unless impotent) but thinks it his duty to pay his visit, once at least, to the temple at Mekka : they scarcely cease running all the way thitherward, showing their vehement desire to have a fresh sight of the *Beit-Allah* ; which as soon as ever they come in sight of, they burst into tears for joy ; and after

having performed *towoaf* for a while, and a few *erkaets*, they return again to Mina. And when the three days of Byram are expired, they all with their tents, &c, come back again to Mekka.

‘ They say, that after the *haggas* are gone from Mina to Mekka, God doth usually send a good shower of rain to wash away the filth and dung of the sacrifices there slain; and also, that those vast numbers of little stones, which I told you the *haggas* throw in defiance of the devil, are all carried away by the angels before the year comes about again. But I am sure I saw vast numbers of them that were thrown the year before, lie upon the ground. After they are returned to Mekka, they can tarry there no longer than the stated time, which is about ten or twelve days; during which time there is a great fair held, where are sold all manner of East India goods, and abundance of fine stones for rings and bracelets, &c, brought from Yemen; also, of china-ware and musk, and variety of other curiosities. Now is the time in which the *haggas* are busily employed in buying, for they do not think it lawful to buy any thing till they have received the title of *hagge*. Every one almost now buys a *caffin*, or shroud, of fine linen, to be buried in, (for they never use coffins for that purpose,) which might have been procured at Algiers, or their other respective homes, at a much cheaper rate; but they choose to buy it here, because they have the advantage of dipping it in the holy water of Zemzem. They are very careful to carry the said *caffin* with them wherever they travel, whether by sea or land, that they may be sure to be buried therein.

‘ The evening before they leave Mekka, every one must go to take their solemn leave of the *Beit*, entering in at the gate called *Bab el Salem*, i. e. welcome-gate; and having continued at *towoaf* as long as

they please, which many do till they are quite tired, and it being the last time of their paying their devotions to it, they do it with floods of tears, as being extremely unwilling to part and bid farewell ; and having drank their fill of the water of Zenizem, they go to one side of the *Beit*, their backs being towards the door called by the name of *Bab el Weedoh*, i. e. the farewell door, which is opposite to the welcome-door ; where having performed two or three *erkaets*, they get upon their legs, and hold up their hands towards the *Beit*, making earnest petitions, and then keep going backward till they come to the above-said farewell gate, being guided by some one or other ; for they account it a very irreverent thing to turn their backs towards the *Beit* when they take leave of it. All the way as they retreat, they continue petitioning, holding up their hands, with their eyes fixed upon the *Beit*, till they are out of sight of it ; and so go to their lodgings weeping.'

Ali Bey, on the 19th, did not fail to throw his seven stones at each of the little stone pillars erected by the Principle of Evil. On the day following, he availed himself of the Prophet's permission to return to Mekka. There he renewed his processions round the Kaaba, his draughts of the water of Zemzem, and his visits to Saffa and Meroua ; till at length, every ceremony being perfectly accomplished which the Wahhabees tolerate, he quitted Mekka, on the 2d of March, for Djidda, which journey his camels accomplished in twenty-three hours. From Djidda he sailed for Yambo, whence, in defiance of the express prohibition of the Sultan Sâoud, he attempted, in company with several Turkish and Arab pilgrims, to reach Medinah ; but when he was within fourteen leagues of that city, he was met by some Wahhabite soldiers, plundered, and sent back to the port. According to the description furnished by Pitts, however, he did not lose much by being deprived of

the sight of the Prophet's tomb. The Barbary hadji took Medinah in their way home. Those Moham-medans who live to the southward of Mekka and in Hindostan, are not bound, it seems, to visit that city; but such as come from Turkey, Tartary, Egypt, and Africa, consider themselves as obliged to do so. The route taken by the caravan to which Pitts was attached, was overland; and he thus describes the order of march.

‘The first day we set out for Mekka, it was without any order at all, all hurly-burly; but the next day every one laboured to get forward; and in order to it, there was many times much quarrelling and fighting: but after every one had taken his place in the caravan, they orderly and peaceably kept the same place till they came to Grand Cairo. They travel four camels in a breast, which are all tied one after the other, like as in teams. The whole body is called a caravan, which is divided into several *cottors*, or companies, each of which hath its name, and consists, it may be, of several thousand camels; and they move, one *cottor* after another, like distinct troops. At the head of each *cottor* is some great gentleman or officer, who is carried in a thing like a horse-litter, borne by two camels, one before and the other behind, which is covered all over with sere-cloth, and over that again with green broad-cloth, and set forth very handsomely. If the said great person hath a wife with him, she is carried in another of the same. At the head of every *cottor* there goes likewise a sumpter-camel, which carries his treasure, &c. This camel hath two bells, about the bigness of our market bells, hanging one on each side, the sound of which may be heard a great way off. Some other of the camels have bells round about their necks, some about their legs, like those which our carriers put about their fore-horse's neck; which, together with the servants, (who belong to the camels, and travel on foot) singing all



night, make a pleasant noise, and the journey passes away delightfully. They say, this music makes the camels brisk and lively. Thus they travel in good order every day till they come to Grand Cairo; and were it not for this order, you may guess what confusion would be amongst such a vast multitude.

‘ They have lights by night, (which is the chief time of travelling, because of the exceeding heat of the sun by day,) which are carried on the top of high poles, to direct the *hagges* in their march. They are somewhat like iron stoves, into which they put short dry wood, which some of the camels are loaded with: it is carried in great sacks, which have a hole near the bottom, where the servants take it out as they see the fires need a recruit. Every *cottor* hath one of these poles belonging to it, some of which have ten, some twelve of these lights on their tops, or more or less; and they are likewise of different figures as well as numbers; one, perhaps, oval way, like a gate, another triangular, or like an N or M, &c, so that every one knows by them his respective *cottor*. They are carried in the front, and set up in the place where the caravan is to pitch, before that comes up, at some distance from one another. They are also carried by day, not lighted; but yet, by the figure and number of them, the *hagges* are directed to what *cottor* they belong, as soldiers are, by their colours, where to rendezvous: and, without such directions, it would be impossible to avoid confusion in such a vast number of people.

‘ Every day, viz, in the morning, they pitch their tents, and rest several hours. When the camels are unloaded, the owners drive them to water, and give them their provender, &c, so that we had nothing to do with them, besides helping to load them.

‘ As soon as our tents were pitched, my business was to make a little fire, and get a pot of coffee. When we had eaten some small matter, and drank the



coffee, we lay down to sleep. Between eleven and twelve we boiled something for dinner, and, having dined, lay down again till about four in the afternoon; when the trumpet was sounded, which gave notice to every one to take down their tents, pack up their things, and load their camels, in order to proceed in their journey. It takes up about two hours' time ere they are all in their places again. At the time of *Aksham-nomas*, and also *Gega-nomas*, they make a halt, and perform their *sallah*, (so punctual are they in their worship,) and then they travel till next morning. If water be scarce, what I call an imaginary *abdes* will do. As for ancient men, it being very troublesome for such to alight off the camels and get up again, it is lawful for them to defer these two times of *nomas* till the next day; but they will be sure to perform it then.

'As for provisions, we bring enough out of Egypt to suffice us till we return thither again. At Mekka, we compute how much will serve us for one day, and consequently for the forty days' journey to Egypt; and if we find we have more than we may well guess will suffice us for so long a time, we sell the overplus at Mekka. There is a charity maintained by the Grand Seignior for water to refresh the poor who travel on foot all the way; for there are many such who undertake this journey (or pilgrimage) without any money, relying on the charity of the *hagges* for subsistence, knowing that they largely extend it at such a time. Every *hagge* carries his provisions, water, bedding, &c, with him, and usually three or four diet together, and sometimes discharge a poor man's expenses the whole journey for his attendance on them.'

About the tenth easy day's journey, they entered the capital of the undivided khalifate.

## MEDINAH\*

Is described by Pitts as ‘but a little town, and poor; yet, it is walled round, and hath in it a great mosque, but nothing near so big as the temple at Mekkka. In one corner of the mosque is built a place about fourteen or fifteen paces square. About this place are great windows fenced with brass grates. In the inside, it is decked with some lamps and ornaments. It is arched all over head. (I find some relate, that there are no fewer than three thousand lamps about Mohammed’s tomb; but it is a mistake, for there are not, as I verily believe, a hundred: and I speak what I know, and have been an eye-witness of.) In the middle of this place is the tomb of Mohammed, where the corpse of that bloody impostor is laid, which hath silk curtains all around it like a bed; which curtains are not costly nor beautiful. There is nothing of his tomb to be seen by any, by reason of the curtains round it; nor are any of the *hagges* permitted to enter there: none go in but the eunuchs, who keep watch over it, and they only to light the lamps which burn there by night, and to sweep and cleanse the place. All the privilege the *hagges* have, is only to thrust in their hands at the windows between the brass grates, and to petition the dead *juggler*, which they do with a wonderful deal of reverence, affection, and zeal.’†

‘On the outside of this place, where Mohammed’s tomb is, are some sepulchres of their reputed saints; among which is one prepared for Christ Jesus, when

\* Its ancient name was Yathreb. It was called *Medinet en Nebbi*, the city of the Prophet, in honour of Mohammed, from the period of the hejira.

† The ridiculous story, that the coffin of Mohammed is suspended by the power of a loadstone, is disowned by the Moslems.

he shall come again personally into the world; for they hold that Christ will come again in the flesh, forty years before the end of the world, to confirm the Mohanmedan faith; and say, likewise, that our Saviour was not crucified in person, but in effigy, or one like him.'

It is thirty-seven days' journey, according to this Writer, from Mekka to Cairo; 'and in all this way, there is scarcely any green thing to be met with, nor beast or fowl to be seen or heard, — nothing but sand stones,' excepting one place which he passed by night, where were some trees, and, as he thought, gardens. 'About ten days before we got to Cairo,' he says, 'we came to a very long, steep hill, called *Ackaba*, which the *hagges* are usually much afraid how they shall be able to get up.\* Those who can, will walk it. The poor camels, having no hoofs, find it very hard work, and many drop here. They were all untied, and we dealt gently with them, moving very slowly, and often halting. Before we came to this hill, I observed no descent; and when we were at the top, there was none, but all plain as before.'

Medinah, though comprised within the Hedjaz, or 'the land of pilgrimage,' is, according to Ali Bey, without the *belled el haram*, or holy land. That territory 'is comprehended between the Red Sea and an irregular line which, commencing at Arabok, about twenty-one leagues to the N. of Djidda, forms a bend from the N. E. to the S. E. in passing by Yelemlem, two days' journey to the N. E. of Mckka: from thence it continues to Karna, about twenty-one leagues to the E. of the same place, and eight leagues westward of Tayif, which is without the holy land; then, turning to the W. S. W., it passes by Dzataerk, and terminates at Mehherma upon the coast, at the

\* See page 199.

port named Almarsa Ibrahim, nearly thirty-two leagues S. E. of Djidda.' It appears, therefore, that the holy land of Islam is fifty-seven leagues in length and twenty-eight in breadth. The whole of this tract is a real desert, containing no river, and only a few inconsiderable springs, no arable land, and scarcely a garden throughout the territory. Mekka and Djidda are the only towns: the other inhabited spots are little else than miserable villages, composed of barracks and tents established near a well or spring. Medinah and Tayif are represented as situated 'on a bountiful land, with plenty of water, and covered with gardens and plantations;'<sup>\*</sup> and it is from the territory of Medinah, Ali Bey was informed, that the celebrated balsam of Mekka (called *belsan*) is chiefly obtained. Pitts, however, mentions no gardens at Medinah, but says, the town draws its supply of corn and necessaries from Abyssinia. According to the former Traveller, the Hedjaz is traversed by a double range of mountains. The loftier range of the two, he supposes to commence near Tayif, which is thirty leagues from the coast, and, bordering the *belled el haram*, to extend as far as *Djebel Mohhar*, in the neighbourhood of the isles† of Hamara. In these mountains water is found. Tayif, Medinah, Djideida, El Hamara, and Yenboa en Nahal (or of the palm-trees, so called to distinguish it from Yen-

\* Tayif, Niebuhr says, 'is situate upon a lofty mountain, in so agreeable a country, that the Arabs compare its environs to those of Damascus and Sanaa. This city supplies Djidda and Mekka with excellent fruits, particularly raisins, and carries on a considerable trade in almonds, which grow in great plenty in its territory.' He was told, also, of 'a charming vally,' called *Wady Fatima*, somewhere between Mekka and Medinah, which Mohammed is said to have bestowed as a dowry on his daughter Fatima. It occurs in the western hadji route, one day's journey from Mekka.

† There are three of these islands; Omelmelek, lat. 25° 15' 24'; Moard, lat. 25° 27'; and Sheikh Morgob, lat. 25° 45' 47'.

boa el Bahar, or of the sea), are situated within this range. The second range, in which Mekka is situated, contains hardly any water, but is believed by Ali Bey to be rich in minerals: it is composed of schistus, porphyry, and hornblende. Pitts, describing the appearance of Mekka, says: 'The town is surrounded for several miles with many thousands of little hills, which are very near one to the other. I have been on the top of some of them near Mekka, where I could see some miles about, but yet was not able to see the furthest of the hills. They are all stony rock, and blackish, and pretty near of a bigness, appearing at a distance like cocks of hay, but all pointing towards Mekka. Some of them are half a mile in circumference, but all nearly of one height. Between these hills is good and plain travelling, though they stand near to one another.'

In travelling from Yenboa (or Yambo) towards Medinah, after traversing the barren sandy plain which extends to the coast, and riding for some leagues between low, bare mountains or hills, Ali Bey arrived at a valley of a singular appearance, which he supposes to be between sixteen and eighteen leagues from Yenboa. 'The mountains on the south side are composed of loose sand, perfectly white; those upon the north side, of rocks of porphyry, hornstone, and schistus. The valley is at most 600 feet broad. When I saw these mountains of sand,' adds Ali Bey, 'as high as those of the rocks, I could not forbear admiring the force which heaped them up, and which binds this accumulation of moving sand, so that the winds do not carry a single atom to those on the north. The bottom of the valley is composed of a variety of rocks and sand. There are several fine plants to be seen.\* The mountains on the north,

\* The Author gathered in this neighbourhood 'a superb species of solanum with large flowers.'



contain a fine collection of porphyries of every colour and grain. In the hornstone rocks, every shade of green may be perceived; and there is also to be found schistus of every species.' A few hours beyond this valley, the road lay between 'several groups of volcanic mountains, entirely black, presenting various resemblances of very picturesque ruins.' The ground is here covered with thorny bushes.

Djideida, through which lies the direct route to Medinah across the desert, is very dismally situated at the bottom of a valley, but has a spring of excellent water; there are also some gardens and plantations of palm-trees. The houses are low, constructed of stone without cement. Ali Bey calculated it to be about twenty-eight leagues E. S. E. of Yenboa, and was told that it was sixteen leagues W. of Medinah. The geographical position of the latter place he considers to be  $2^{\circ} 40'$  E. of Yenboa, under almost the same parallel of latitude.\* The thermometer, in the desert, was  $28^{\circ}$  of Reaumur at noon in the shade. There is another road, which passes by Yenboa en Nahal, a town situated in the midst of the mountains, a day's journey E. N. E. of Yenboa el Bahar. It is said to have plenty of water, fine gardens, and a considerable number of palm-trees, from which it takes its name. The inhabitants are all shereefs, or descendants of the Prophet.

In taking our departure from the *belled el haram*, the forbidden ground which none but Moslem feet have been for so many ages allowed to tread, one cannot help feeling astonishment that such a tract of country should have been originally fixed upon as the land of pilgrimage; that in its very centre should have been placed the metropolis of the old Arabian

\* Yenboa (Yambo), according to the observations of Ali Bey, is in lat.  $24^{\circ} 7' 6''$  N., long.  $37^{\circ} 32' 30''$  E. of Greenwich.

idolatry. If we suppose that Mekka owes its foundation, as is probable, to the Kaaba, the pantheon of the ancient pagans of the peninsula, it still remains as a subject of speculation, how that edifice came to be erected within the recesses of these barren mountains, and how Mount Saffa and Mount Meroua, and the valley of Mina, became consecrated by local traditions in the remote times to which history refers the origin of the existing rites.\* Can we suppose that the region always presented the same arid and sterile aspect which it now exhibits? If so, how shall we account for its being early peopled by various tribes, who, whether they subsisted by hunting† or led a pastoral life, must have required a very different sort of country to enable them to obtain the means of subsistence? In those remote times, the inhabitants could not have been indebted to the precarious supplies of foreign commerce for the necessaries of life. Yet, Mekka is now absolutely dependent on distant countries for supplies of every kind; and its sandy, waterless valleys seem never to have been susceptible of cultivation.

It is, however, impossible, we think, to avoid the conclusion, that the whole country must have undergone a physical transformation; slow, perhaps, in the beginning, but constantly accelerating in its progress. Originally, the springs which abound in the loftier mountains, fed, perhaps, by more copious rains, might send their streams through the valleys which descend towards the *Tehama* or sandy belt, extending from the foot of the hills to the shores of the Red Sea. Wherever water flowed, vegetation would clothe the soil; and it is far from improbable, that the palm-tree, which is now thinly scattered over the desert, once bordered the coast, and clothed the valleys, providing

\* See p. 45.

† As Ishmael, Gen. xxi, 20; and Esau, xxv, 27; xxvii, 3.

at once shade and sustenance in these burning regions. The small plants and flowering shrubs which Ali Bey found in a valley destitute of water in the way to Djideida, and the flower which he saw on the way to Arafat, afford intimations that even this barren soil had once its indigenous productions. The effect of these in imparting moisture to the atmosphere, in lessening the rapidity of evaporation, and in preserving the soil from becoming pulverised, it is impossible to calculate. When we consider the changes which have been effected, within the times of authentic history, in the Valley of Mexico and other parts of the New World, in consequence, chiefly, of laying bare the soil to the action of a tropical sun,\* we shall not find it difficult to imagine, that even *Arabia Deserta* once exhibited a very different appearance, — that the gazelle, the rock-goat, and the wild ass found sustenance among its hills; that the acacia, the tamarisk, the balsam-tree, and the palm flourished in its plains; and that its inhabitants pitched their tents in the midst of flocks and herds who wandered over a pastoral wilderness. To two leading causes we may with probability ascribe the change, — the devastations of war, laying bare the country of its vegetation and filling up the wells, together, perhaps, with the destruction or retreat of the wild animals, — and the constant action of the winds blowing the sands from the eastern deserts, which, when unobstructed by vegetation, instead of forming a barrier of sand hills, would spread over the plains, choke up the wells and fountains, and aid the process by which the quartz and sandstone rocks are being ground down to im-

\* See Mod. Trav., Mexico, vol. i, p. 248; Colombia, p. 178. Humboldt remarks, that wherever trees are destroyed, the springs are either entirely dried up, or become less abundant.

palpable powder, such as loads the poisonous blasts of the semoum.

Should Mekka ever be laid open to the inspection of enlightened Europeans, while the Kaaba is standing, the alleged antiquity of the structure will entitle it to examination. There is some room for suspicion, whether this may be the original edifice, or a modern erection on the same site. The Black Stone is probably the same that has been kissed and adored by Moslems or Pagans for these three thousand years, notwithstanding its *hejira* in the ninth century, when it was carried off by Abu Thaher. It is remarkable, that the Temple of Mekka and the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, has each its *Bætulion*,\* or heavenly stone. That to which the latter owes both its name of *El Sakhara* and its existence, is a large, irregular, oblong mass of compact limestone, which occupies the centre of the mosque.† This stone (*hadjar el sakhara*) is also fabled to have fallen from heaven, like the Black Stone of Mekka; and a ridiculous legend is attached to it. But it is apparently a mere clumsy imitation of the Arabian idol, and shows only the notions of those who thought that a mosque, even at Jerusalem, and on the site of the Temple of Solomon, required this miraculous block to consecrate it in the eyes of the Moslems! One might have supposed that the Mekka stone was possibly of meteoric origin, did not the description of it given by Ali Bey oppose the conjecture. The ‘abomination’ which stands in the once holy place at Jerusalem, bears an evident affinity to the limestone of the adjacent mountains.

We must now again spread sail to the southward, and, in company with Niebuhr, the learned Danish Traveller, descend the Arabian Gulf.

\* In the *Βαϊτουλίον* of the Greeks, and the *Beit-Allah* of the Arabs, we have evidently the Beth El of the Hebrews.

† See Mod. Trav., Palestine, p. 99.

## FROM DJIDDA TO LOHEIA.

The vessel in which he embarked, was 'more like a hogshead than a ship, being only seven fathoms long by three in breadth, without a deck, the planks extremely thin, and not pitched.' The sailors, nine in number, besides the captain, were all black slaves from Africa or Malabar. The voyage was, however, safe and pleasant. The banks of coral are less numerous in the southern part of the gulf. Some flying fishes were observed, which, Niebuhr says, the Arabs call *Djerâd el bahar*, sea-locusts. After seven days' sailing, (the captain cast anchor every night,) they anchored near Ghunfude, a considerable town, but consisting merely of huts: it belongs to the Shereef of Mekka, and is governed by one of his officers, who lives in a small isle at some distance from the city. It is situated in lat.  $19^{\circ} 7' N$ . All the ships employed in carrying coffee to Djidda, are obliged to anchor here, and pay a duty to the shereef. The next day, they passed within sight of Hali, a frontier town of the Hedjaz, where the Shereef of Mekka keeps a garrison.\* The following day, they cast anchor 'near a mountain called *Kolembel*, situated in the middle of the sea, and said by the Arabs to have been a volcano. It may possibly,' adds the learned 'Traveller, 'be the burning island which is placed by Ptolemy and Arrian in these latitudes.' On the sixteenth day from Djidda, they anchored in the harbour of Loheia.†

The town of Loheia, like several others in these

\* All the petty territories southward of *Râs Hâli* (lat.  $18^{\circ} 36'$ ) are considered as forming part of Yemen. Between Hali and Attûed, the frontier of the Shereef of Abu Arisch, the country is possessed by independent tribes.

† For the minute details of this voyage, not being of general interest, the reader is referred to the *Voyage en Arabie*, tom. i, p. 228.



parts, owes its foundation to a Mohammedan saint, who built a hut on the shore where the town now stands, which has gradually risen up round his tomb. In the time of Niebuhr, it had been standing for only three centuries. Before then, the governor of the district resided at Marabea, a little port a mile to the north; but the harbour of that town became filled up, and the place was gradually abandoned for Loheia. This port, however, is a very indifferent one, even the smallest vessels being obliged to anchor at a distance from the town, and, at low water, even laden boats cannot approach it. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, a considerable trade in coffee is carried on here with Cairo through Djidda. Loheia is the most northern port in the dominions of the Imaum of Sanaa: it stands in lat.  $15^{\circ} 42' N$ . Its territory is arid and barren. The town is without walls, but is defended by twelve towers, built at equal distances round it, and resembling those in some of the imperial cities in Germany. Only one of these, however, admits of being defended by cannon: the rest are so ill built as to be utterly despicable. There are a few houses of stone, but the greater part are mere mud huts thatched with grass, with a straw mat for a door, and rarely any windows: such huts are common throughout the Tehama. Lime is prepared in the neighbourhood by the calcination of coral. Mineral salt is found in a hill within two leagues of the city. The water here is bad. The well which supplies the common people is a league distant from the town, and the best water, which is not good, comes from two leagues and a half. Niebuhr found the inhabitants very inquisitive, intelligent, and hospitable, and polished, in comparison with the Arabs nearer Egypt. The emir, or *dowlah*, of the place was an African, entirely black, who had risen from being a slave, to occupy one of the highest offices in the service of the Imaum. He had been well educated,

and discovered an upright and enlightened mind. He was much delighted with the present of an English telescope.

In Yemen, the usual mode of travelling is on asses. Christians are not prohibited here, however, the use of horses, and the place is far pleasanter. Niebuhr and his companions, therefore, hired camels for their baggage, and horses for themselves. Travelling is as little exposed to danger in the Tehama, he says, as in Europe; so that there was no occasion to wait for a caravan in setting off to explore the interior.

#### FROM LOHEIA TO BEIT EL FAKIH AND MOCHA.

From Loheia, Niebuhr proceeded southward across the Tehama to the inland town of *Beit el Fakih*. The first day, he travelled through a parched and barren tract, along an arm of the sea, which runs a considerable way inland, and halted at a *mokeija*, or traveller's hut, near the village of Okem. These *mokeijas* are a sort of coffee-houses, intended to answer the purpose of inns; the accommodations are, however, of the humblest description, consisting of a long seat of straw ropes, and, for refreshment, coffee served out in coarse earthen cups. The proprietor generally resides in some neighbouring village, whence he comes every day to wait for passengers. At midnight, our Travellers reached the large village of Djalie, the residence of a sub-dowlah. Throughout the whole country they found the water scarce and bad, but the villages were less distant from one another, than could have been expected in so barren a region. At the large village of Meneyre, through which they passed the next day, they found a *man-sale*, that is, a house in which travellers are entertained *gratis* for a certain number of days. On hearing of the arrival of European guests, the master of

this *mansale* attended in person, to see that his servants treated them properly. He caused some wheaten bread to be baked, which in the Tehama is rare, ordered some cow's milk, when he saw them nauseate the viscosity of the camel's milk, and was going to kill a sheep, had they staid longer. The Arabian servants gave the Travellers to understand, that any compensation for this hospitality would be ill received by their master; but the attendant took an opportunity, when unobserved, of soliciting a small gratuity for himself. At Dahhi, which they reached the second night, there is a mosque, a saint's tomb, and a few stone houses, and, near the village, a tannery, a manufactory of earthen-ware, and one of indigo. This place lies in the route from Loheia to Sanaa. It is situated in lat.  $15^{\circ} 13'$  N. The direct road to *Beit el Fakih* now passes along an arid tract with scarcely any water, and almost uninhabited. Niebuhr preferred a longer route, nearer the mountains, in which he met with several small woods and a number of villages skirted with bushes: there are also many wells, from a hundred and sixty to a hundred and seventy feet deep, but dug in sloping ground. He passed, in this day's journey, two valleys which, in the rainy season, are filled with water, *Wady Shab el Hadjar* and *Shab Defin*. In the evening, he rested at the large village of Ghannemie, situated in lat.  $14^{\circ} 58'$ . The fifth day, he passed a village called Kataja, where there is a *mansale*, another valley called *Wady Sham*, and, about half-way between Ghannemie and *Beit el Fakih*, the valley of *El Helle*. He passed the night in a wretched coffee-house, and early on the sixth day, reached the end of his journey.

The town of *Beit el Fakih* (that is, the house of the sage) owes its origin and its name to the famous saint Achmed Ibn Mousa, whose sepulchre is shown in a pretty mosque situated on a sandy hill near the

town. Like Loheia, it has risen in consequence of the neighbouring port of Ghalefka becoming choked up. It is the residence of a *dowlah*, and has a citadel. Its situation is very favourable for trade, being only half a day's journey from the hills where the coffee is grown, four days from Mocha, about six from Sanaa, four and a half from Loheia, and one and a half from Hodeida. It is situated in lat.  $14^{\circ} 31'$ . The coffee-trade attracts to the place, merchants from Hedjaz, Egypt, Barbary, Syria, Persia, India, and even Europe. Here, also, as in all the large towns of Yemen, are found a number of Banians, — a singular caste, to whom there will be occasion to make repeated reference. Though allowed the free exercise of their religion, they dare not bring their women here, nor are they permitted to burn their dead; as soon, therefore, as they have accumulated a little property, they are eager to return to their native country. The town, which contains many houses of stone, is situated in a plain far from fertile, but carefully cultivated: the dwellings are all detached, and the greater part are, like those of Loheia, mere huts. The place is much infested by a species of ant called *ard*, which is equally destructive in the house and in the garden, consuming clothes, fruits, and provisions of every description. Niebuhr copied here an ancient Kufic inscription.

Ghalefka, distant five leagues W. S. W. from Beit el Fakih, and about the same distance from Zebid, was once a flourishing town, but is now reduced to about a score wretched huts, scattered among date-trees. The harbour is so completely filled up, that no vessel of the smallest burden can enter. Not only has the sea receded, and the coral reefs increased, but the winds have formed a considerable sand-hill. There is a spring of excellent water here, which is ascribed to the prayers of a certain Seid Ali, the patron saint of the place to whom was dedicated the mosque that is



now in ruins. In the burying-place were found two stones bearing Kufic inscriptions. The harbour of Hodeida, six leagues N. of Ghalefka, is somewhat better than that of Loheia, but large vessels cannot enter it. It is the residence of a dowlah, and has its citadel, custom-house, and patron saint, a few stone houses, and a great many huts.

Zebid, before the harbour of Hodeida was choked up, was the principal town and most commercial place in all Tehama. It is situated between five and six leagues S. S. W. of Beit el Fakih, near the largest and most fertile *wady* in the country. This was now dry, but, in the rainy season, a large river flows through it, which, filling the canals, waters all the adjacent lands. 'Viewed from a distance,' says Niebuhr, 'the town appears to some advantage, by means of the mosques and *kubbets*, of which it is full. Several of these mosques were erected by different pashas who resided here during the short period that this part of Arabia was in the possession of the Ottoman Porte. But Zebid pays dear for its exterior magnificence. Its inhabitants are impoverished by the numerous clergy belonging to those pious foundations, by whom the wealth of this place is almost wholly engrossed. I was told, as a matter of certainty, that if the whole revenue of the territory be considered as divided into five parts, the clergy receive three of these; the imaum, one for the taxes; and the inhabitants have only one-fifth remaining for their maintenance.

'The Turks have left here one useful monument of their power,—an aqueduct which conveyed water from the hills into the city. But this work has been so neglected, that only its ruins now remain, and the inhabitants are obliged to content themselves with water from their draw-wells, which, fortunately, is not bad, and in such plenty as to water many fine



gardens that are to be seen in the neighbourhood of the city.

‘Abulfeda ascribes eight gates to Zebid; but, of these, five only are now standing, and the river is gradually breaking down a part of them. The walls of the old city are demolished, and the very ruins are sold by poor people, who gather out the stones, and sell them for building new houses. The present buildings occupy about one half of the ancient extent of the city. Zebid is still distinguished for an academy, in which the youth of Tehama, and of a part of Yemen, study such sciences as are cultivated among the Mussulmans. This is, besides, the seat of a dowlah, a mufti, and a kadi of the sect of Shaffei, and of two other kadis, of the sect of Zeidi, to which the imaum and the greater part of his subjects profess to belong.’

Much indigo is grown here; and where the vale has not been encroached upon and ravaged by the torrents, the fields have a rich and beautiful appearance. Between *Wady Zebid* and *Beit el Fakih*, there is another beautiful valley, in which formerly stood a considerable town called El Mahad; and which still contains some populous villages. It receives the waters of Mount Rema, and discharges them into the sea near Shurem.

Niebuhr made an excursion from *Beit el Fakih* to Bulgosa, in the coffee-mountains, distant half a day's journey. The roads are very bad: neither asses nor mules can be used, for the hills are to be climbed only by steep and narrow paths. Compared with the parched plains of the Tehama, the scenery is delightful. The mountains are of basalt, and detached rocks, composed almost entirely of basaltic columns, form a grand and picturesque feature in the landscape. In some instances, cascades are seen to rush from the summits, having the appearance of flowing over rows of artificial pillars. These columns, being easily

separated, are shaped into steps where the ascent is most difficult, and into terraces to support the coffee-plantations, which rise in the form of an amphitheatre. The coffee-trees were at this period (March) in flower, and exhaled an exquisite perfume. The air at Bulgosa is much fresher and cooler than in the plain, and the women have a fairer complexion; yet here, the Travellers had climbed scarcely half the ascent to Kusma, where the dowlah of the district dwells, upon the loftiest peak of this range of mountains.

Another excursion was, from *Beit el Fakih* to Udden and Djobla. The first day's journey lay in a S. S. E. direction across the plain, passing through several villages, to Robo, where there is a weekly *suk* or market,—a distance of about seven leagues. The next day, in about a league, they entered upon the mountains. Here, near the village of Meschal, the learned Traveller saw, for the first time in Yemen, running water. The channel of the river, which is called *Wady Zebid* till it enters the Tehama, is very broad at this place, but the stream was not above twenty-four feet in width: as soon as it reaches the burning plains, it spreads into a shallow lake, and is lost among the sands. At the end of eight hours and a quarter, they halted at Machsa, a miserable village, although it is the residence of a sub-dowlah, and has a weekly fair. The huts are still more wretched here, than those in the Tehama. They have no walls, consisting merely of a few poles laid together and covered with reeds, and are so small, that two persons lying on the floor, occupy almost the whole area. The inhabitants sit and sleep on the bare ground; and for bedding, these mountaineers get into a large sack, which keeps them warm by confining the natural perspiration. Coarse millet bread and camels' milk were all that these villages afforded, but the water every where in the mountains is delicious.

The next day, they passed, by winding roads, into a district where the lands begin to appear more fertile and better cultivated, and came to a high hill called *Nakil*, which, from the glistening micaceous sand at its foot, is supposed by the natives to contain gold. They rested in a hut near a village which is inhabited only on a market day. The fourth day, they crossed several rivulets, and rejoined Wady Zebid, and in the evening, reached the town of Udden. This is a small place, containing not above 300 houses, but all solidly built of stone. The governor is an hereditary sheikh. The coffee-trees of this district are esteemed to yield the very best coffee of all Yemen. The country, which had hitherto appeared thinly peopled, now assumed a more populous aspect. The road from Udden to Djobla lies over a steep mountain, and has formerly been paved, but was now out of repair. 'On this mountain,' says Niebuhr, 'I saw a new instance of the care with which the Arabians provide for the accommodation of travellers. Here, for the first time, we found a *madjil* or reservoir of excellent water for the use of passengers. These reservoirs are of masonry, of a conical figure, and a vase always stands ready for drawing the water. Through all the fertile parts of Yemen, we found many of these *madjils* by the side of the highways. As storms are pretty frequent among these mountains, some small vaulted houses have been built upon that over which we passed, to shelter travellers when surprised by any sudden blast. As we advanced, we saw several villages situated in a cultivated tract. The sides of the hills were covered with rye, and had an agreeable aspect. This part of the country, though in other respects very fertile, produces no coffee.'

Djobla is the head town of a district, and the residence of a dowlah. It stands upon the brink of a steep precipice, and contains about 600 houses of a tolerable height and appearance. Its streets are paved,

an uncommon circumstance in Yemen. There are Jews here, who, as in all other towns where they reside, have a separate quarter. The town has neither castle nor walls, nor ancient remains. The tomb of a Turkish pasha at some distance, shows, however, that the conquests of the Ottoman have been extended over these mountainous regions.

From Djobla, the learned Traveller proceeded three hours in a direction S. E. by S., over an undulating country, and slept in a large *simsera* (the name here given to a khan or karavanserai), situated two-thirds of the way up the southern side of a very high mountain named *Mharras*. The next morning, they were an hour in ascending a still higher summit called *Choddra*, on which are ruins of a considerable building of hewn stone, the walls of which have been flanked by towers, and two reservoirs of masonry. The whole structure appears to be of high antiquity, but is in complete ruin. Niebuhr could discover no inscriptions. The Arabs ascribe the building of this castle, and of another on Mount Takel near Djobla, to a certain Assâne Jahheli, the word *Jahhel* (ignorant) being the term they apply to their pagan forefathers. From this elevation, there is a noble prospect of a considerable tract of country studded with villages. Mount Mharras is descended by a paved road which winds round the steep declivity, this being the high road between Mocha and Sanaa. Our Traveller now turned to the S.S.W., and pursued the road to Mocha as far as Taas; he then left the great road, and proceeded westward, traversing the territory of Ibn Aklan, an independent sheikh, to the small town of Haas, situated in the Tehama. He crossed several times, towards the latter part of this journey, a considerably large and rapid river, called *Wady Suradji*, and passed through several small streams which appear to empty themselves into one large river. Haas is the residence of a dowlah, who lives in a small for-



tress: its district is of narrow extent, but fertile in corn and dates. It is bounded on one side by Zebid, on the other, by Ibn Aklan. The town is small and ill built: a considerable quantity of coarse earthenware is manufactured there. The distance from Taas is about seventeen leagues. Near the confines of the Tehama, M. Forskal (Niebuhr's companion) discovered the shrub which produces the real balm of Mekka: it was in flower. The Arabs call it *Abu sham*, the sweet-smelling tree, but know of no other use for it than burning the wood as a perfume. On leaving the mountains, the heat became most oppressive. In the way to Zebid, the Travellers crossed, without wetting their feet, the river Suradji which they had seen so large among the hills. From Zebid, they returned to Beit el Fakih.

After remaining here for some time to recruit their health, Niebuhr and his companions again set forward for Mocha. The road lay through the beautiful valley of the Zebid, where the peasants were busily employed in cultivating their fields, and raising dykes for the purpose of irrigation. From these fields to Mocha, there occur very few villages, and the whole intervening country is arid and sandy, but covered with bushes and coarse grass. Four leagues and a half from Zebid is the village of Sherdje, supposed to be the *Alsharjia* of Abulfeda, who describes it as a port; but, if it was ever situated on the coast, the waters of the gulf must have receded very considerably. It stands in lat.  $13^{\circ} 59'$ . On the fourth day, after a disagreeable and fatiguing journey, they entered the town of Mocha. For the description of this place, however, we shall turn to the pages of two more recent travellers.



## MOCHA.

The Author of 'Scenes and Impressions,' sailed from Bombay, in Dec. 1822, in an Arab vessel, 'rude and ancient in her construction as those which, in former and successive ages carried the rich freights of India for the Ptolemies, the Roman prefects, and the Arabian khalifs of Egypt.' At early dawn on the twelfth day, they made the high land of Arabia the Happy. 'The rising sun soon showed the savage coast

'Barren and bare; unsightly, unadorned.'

No grass of the rock, no flower of the heath, no shrub, no bird, no look of life. Cape Morbat was the point we first made, and we coasted it thence to the Bay of Aden, making, in succession, the land of Fartakh, Siout, Bogashoua, and Maculla. Near the last spot, we did see a boat or two stealing along the shore; but the features of the coast were uniform—dark, waste, wild; the rocks not very lofty, black, and scorched at their summits; here, craggy and broken, with the waves dashing at their feet; there, smoother, with brown and arid sides, and with beds or belts of yellow sand below. Such is the aspect of Araby the Blest; and for 1,800 miles from the point we first made, to the shores of Midian, in the Gulf of Akaba, there is little, very little variety. Like the rough and russet coat of the Persian pomegranate, which gives little promise of the rich and crimson pulp within, so Arabia, all forbidding as she looks, can boast of Yemen and her sparkling springs, of her frankincense and precious gums, her spices and coffee-berries, her luscious dates, and her honey of the rock. But the streams which descend from those fertile regions, never reach the sea; they are drank up by the sands; and the long line of coast, excepting three or four

spots where the merchant and the mariner have found a haven, or where some pastoral tribe has dug a well, is but a burning solitude.

‘For half a day, we dropped anchor in the back bay of Aden, but, as we were six miles from the town, our *nakhoda* did not wish us to go on shore. The scenery of this bay is of a very wild and savage character; the rocks black and ragged. It blew fresh too, and was cloudy, and the whole picture was darkly beautiful.’ Cape Aden is a very lofty and steep rock, and is discovered between fifteen and twenty leagues off at sea. From the summit, on which are some ruined towers, you command an extent of ten leagues inland. The road is described as the best in all Arabia. In the account of a Voyage to Arabia, performed by the French in 1708-10, edited by M. La Roque,\* Aden is thus described:—

‘This city is situated at the foot of high mountains, which surround it almost on every side; according to Abulfeda, in long. 70°, lat. 12°. There are five or six forts at the top of these mountains, with curtains, and many other fortifications in the narrow passes. The water is thence conveyed by a handsome aqueduct, to a large reservoir about a quarter of a league from the city, which furnishes all the inhabitants with very good water, there being no other to be had at Aden; and I know not by what authority our geographers make a river pass through that city. This place is enclosed with walls, which are now in a very bad condition, especially on the sea-side, where, however, there are some platforms at certain intervals, with five or six batteries of brass cannon, some of them carrying sixty-pound balls. It is believed that they are part of the artillery which Solyman II, left behind him upon taking the city, and conquering almost all the country, which the Turks have since been obliged

\* The English translation is in 12mo. London, 1726.

to abandon to the Arabian princes. There is but one way to approach Aden on the land-side, and that is by a very narrow causeway, running out into the sea in the manner of a peninsula. The head of this causeway is commanded by a fort, with guards set at particular distances; and within a cannon-shot further, there is another fort of an oval figure, with forty pieces of great cannon, mounted on several batteries, and a garrison; so that it would be impossible to attempt a descent on that side; and on the way of communication between the city and this place, there is still another fort, with twelve guns and a garrison. Toward the sea, by which this town is indeed accessible, there is a bay, eight or nine leagues wide at the opening, divided into two roads; one of which is very large, and pretty far from the city; the other, less and nearer, which is called the harbour. This latter is about a league broad, taking the breadth from the citadel, which commands it with fifty guns, to the point where the ports which I have been describing lie. You may anchor all over it, in from eighteen to twenty and twenty-two fathom.

‘The city is considerably large, and one may still see several handsome houses two stories high, and flat-roofed, as also abundance of rubbish and ruins. It may be easily judged from what remains, and from so advantageous a situation, that Aden was once a famous city, and of great importance, a strong place, and the principal bulwark of Arabia Felix. The territory around, though rather confined, is very pleasant, with a great deal of vegetation growing along the sides of the mountains.

‘It must be owned, that nothing can be finer in its kind than the baths here: they are all lined with marble or jasper, and covered with a handsome dome, having a hole at the top to let in the light, adorned on the inside with galleries, supported by magnificent

pillars. The whole building is very conveniently divided into chambers, closets, and other vaulted rooms, which all join to the principal hall, where the baths are covered by the dome. From hence, in our way to our lodging, we had to pass through the market-place, where we saw store of meat, fish, and other things that seemed to us very good in their several kinds.'

Aden has been celebrated from the remotest periods for its commerce and its excellent harbour. In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, it maintained an extensive intercourse with India and China, and was the *entrepôt* of the riches of the East. But it was devastated in the wars between the Turks and Portuguese, and its commerce has been transferred to Mocha.\*

'It was a bright, a laughingly bright day,' continues the picturesque Writer whose voyage we are pursuing, 'when, with a fine, fair breeze, we sailed through the Gate of Tears (*Bab al Mondoub*); for so did the ancient Arabs name those narrow straits at the mouth of the Red Sea, regarded by their early navigators as so perilous, and so often, indeed, fatal to their inexperience.† We had a sail in company

\* 'Aden is so much better situated for trade with Berbera, in consequence of both monsoons being favourable for passing and repassing, that the greater part of the myrrh and gum-arabic is carried to that place, where the Panians of Mocha have each a partner established to conduct their business. The frankincense is chiefly cultivated near to Cape Gardafui, and is exported from a harbour of the Samaulies, called *Bunder Cassim* near *Djebel Feel* (Cape Felix). The Samaulies, who inhabit the coast from the Straits to Cape Gardafui, have a kind of navigation-act, by which they exclude the Arab vessels from their ports, and bring the produce of their country either to Aden or Mocha in their own dows.' VALENTIA'S *Travels*, vol. ii, p 354.

† The Straits, according to Lord Valentia, are not above three miles wide.



here, and loud and joyous was the greeting between the crews, as we both cast anchor in a little bay, just within the lesser Bab, by which we entered. From this anchorage, and, indeed, all the morning, while making for, and passing the straits, we had the black, lofty shore of Africa in view, with its Cape of Burials; — for, to the fancy of the ancient Arab, ‘the shrill spirit of the storm sat dim’ upon the rocky brow of Cape Guadafui, and ‘enjoyed the death of the mariner.’

‘We ran down upon Mocha with a full sail on the following morning. The town looks white and cheerful, the houses lofty, and have a square, solid appearance; the roadstead is almost open, being only protected by two narrow spits of sand, on one of which is a round castle, and on the other an insignificant fort. A date-grove adjoins the city, and extends nearly two miles along the southern beach; a pleasing object for the eye to repose upon, which is fatigued, if you gaze in any other direction, by one unvarying picture of brown and desolate sterility.

‘So far from the sea-ports of Arabia and India resembling each other, to the commonly observant eye, the contrast is striking. You have turbans and loose garments, but they are different both in fashion and materials. You have brown and black complexions; you have the clothed and the naked; but they differ, both in feature, form, and gesture, from those whom you have left behind. Under the coarse awnings of its narrow bazars, you meet the well-dressed merchants in robes of woollen cloth, and from above the folds of the snow white turban, you see a red woollen cap, with a tassel of purple silk. At every step, you meet the black, the half-naked Abyssinian, straight as the young areca, with a nose sufficiently prominent to give expression to his features, and having his curled woolly hair died with a reddish yellow, the foppery of his country. Then there is the



stout Arab porter, in his coarse brown garment, bowing under a heavy load of dates, the matting all oozing and clammy with the luscious burden. Lastly, you have the Bedouin, with the hue of the desert on his cheek, the sinewy limb, the eye dark and fiery. He hath a small turban, a close-bodied vest, a coarse sash, all of dull colours; the arm, the leg, are bare; the brown bosom open to the sun and wind; sandals on his feet; a broad, *straight*, two-edged sword in his hand; a long and ready poinard in his girdle. For the cold night-wind he has a cloak of goat's hair, or black, or white, or made in long broad stripes of both colours. He walks erect, and moves directly to his front, giving place to none. Though every where surrounded by Turkish or Persian despots, nay, though there be towns, and imaums, and dowlahs in Arabia itself, he looks, and he can boast, that he is personally free. Ideal is the happiness of savage life; but it is impossible to look, without admiring wonder, on men who contentedly proclaim the sandy plain and naked rock their patrimony, have no dwelling but the tent, no entrenchment but the sword, no law but the traditionary song of their bards, no government but the aged sheikh of their tribe. When I contrast this, their noble preference of a solitary and savage independence, to the life led by those who slumber under Turkish masters in cities, always polluted by crime, and often disturbed by terror, with much to pity in their condition, and much to condemn in their conduct, I find every thing to admire in their choice.

‘Other objects in these bazars attract your gaze. Long strings of camels and asses, the large coarse sheep of Abyssinia, the small, thin species of Arabia, the tall brown goats; the shops of the armourers, with their long, polished sword-blades, daggers, spears, matchlocks, and here and there the half-worn shield of other days; then there are the cook-shops, with their hot cakes of bread, and their large coppers with

portions of meat and fowls, swimming in ghee, and ready for the traveller; and, a step further, the caravanserais and coffee-houses, with groups of townsmen and traders reclining on couches of the date leaf, smoking their small hookahs, sipping their kishu, and perpetually stroking their long beards.'

The most full and minute description of the town is given by Lord Valentia, who visited it repeatedly during his examination of the shores of the Red Sea. Its appearance from the sea is, he says, tolerably handsome, as all the buildings are white-washed, and the minarets of the three mosques rise to a considerable height. The uniform line of the flat-roofed houses is also broken by several circular domes of *kobbas*, or chapels. 'On landing at a pier, which has been constructed for the convenience of trade, the effect is improved by the battlements of the walls, and a lofty tower on which cannon are mounted, which advances before the town, and is meant to protect the sea gate. The moment, however, that the traveller passes the gates, these pleasing ideas are put to flight by the filth that abounds in every street, and more particularly in the open spaces which are left within the walls, by the gradual decay of the deserted habitations which once filled them. The principal building in the town is the residence of the dola, which is large and lofty, having one front to the sea, and another to a square, where, on a Friday, he and his chief officers amuse themselves in throwing the *jerid* in the manner described by Niebuhr. Another side of the square, which is the only regular place in the town, is filled up by the official residence of the *bas kateb*, or secretary of state, and an extensive serai, built by the Turkish pacha during the time that Mocha was tributary to the Grand Seignior. These buildings externally have no pretensions to architectural elegance, yet are by no means ugly objects, from their turreted tops, and fantastic ornaments in white

stucco. The windows are in general small, stuck into the wall in an irregular manner, closed with lattices, and sometimes opening into a wooden, carved-work balcony. In the upper apartments, there is generally a range of circular windows above the others, filled with thin strata of a transparent stone, which is found in veins in a mountain near Sanaa. None of these can be opened, and only a few of the lower ones, in consequence of which, a thorough air is rare in their houses; yet, the people of rank do not seem oppressed by the heat, which is frequently almost insupportable to a European. The floors, as well as the roofs of the larger houses, are made of chunam, which is sustained by beans, with pieces of plank, or thin sticks of wood, laid across, and close to each other. As they never use a level, the floors are extremely uneven; but this is a trifling inconvenience to people who never use chairs or tables, but are always reclining on couches, supported on every side by cushions. The internal construction of their houses is uniformly bad. The passages are long and narrow, and the staircases so steep, that it is frequently difficult to mount them. At the dola's, numerous doors are well secured on the landing-places, to prevent any sudden hostile attack. Little lime is used in any of their buildings; constant care is therefore necessary to prevent the introduction of moisture; but, with caution, they last for many years. If, however, a house is neglected, it speedily becomes a heap of rubbish; the walls returning to their original state of mud, from which they had been formed into bricks by the heat of the sun alone. The wooden materials very soon vanish in a country where firing is extremely scarce, so that even the ruins of cities which were celebrated for their magnificence in former times, may now be sought for in vain.

‘The best houses are all facing the sea, and chiefly to the north of the sea gate. The British factory is

a large and lofty building, but has most of the inconveniences of an Arab house. It is, however, far superior to the French or Danish factories, which are rapidly falling to decay. The lower order of Arabs live in huts, composed of wicker-work, covered on the inside with mats, and sometimes on the outside with a little clay. The roofs are uniformly thatched. A small yard is fenced off in front of each house; but this is too small to admit a circulation of air. It is singular, that these habitations should be crowded close together, while a large part of the space within the walls is left unoccupied.

‘The town of Mocha is surrounded by a wall, which towards the sea is not above sixteen feet high, though on the land-side it may, in some places, be thirty. In every part, it is too thin to resist a cannon-ball, and the batteries along shore are unable to bear the shock of firing the cannon that are upon them. Two forts are erected, for the protection of the harbour, on two points of land which project considerably into the sea, at about a mile and a half from each other. An English man-of-war would level either to the ground with a single broadside. There are two other batteries within the town, but they are in a still more defenceless state. The guns on all these places are useless, except to return a salute. The Arabs, when they purchased them from infidels, considered them as *Sheitan*, or belonging to the devil, and therefore immediately set to work to make them holy. To effect this, they, with the most perfect ignorance, enlarged the touch-hole, till nearly the whole of the gunpowder explodes by it, which is also the way by which it very frequently enters. As, however, they have never had occasion to use these guns hostilely, they are not aware of the mischief they have done. The walls on the land-side are a sufficient defence against the Wahabees, who always storm a town by means of their cavalry, and the numerous round towers have a very



imposing effect on people who are totally ignorant of the use of artillery. Although under constant alarm from the Wahhabees, they have neglected to repair the fortifications, and seem to consider the many small doors, nearly on the level of the ground, as affording no facility of entrance to an enemy. Near the sea gate, a part of the wall has actually fallen down, and has been repaired with a few boards and matting. The town runs, for about half a mile, in nearly a straight line facing the sea ; but afterwards, the walls take a circular direction inland. The space thus included is in part not built upon, and, I should suppose, does not contain a population of above 5,000 souls.

‘ The garrison, in general, consists of about 80 horse, and 200 matchlock-men, who receive a regular pay of two dollars and a half per month, for which they provide their own arms, and powder and ball for exercise ; but when they quit Mocha, they are supplied with every thing, and have four dollars in advance. There is not a vestige of discipline among them, but they are by no means bad marksmen, though they are a long time in taking aim. When on guard at the different gates, they recline on couches, with their matchlocks lying neglected by their sides, while the right hand is occupied in sustaining either the pipe, or a cup of coffee. Their matchlocks are good, and richly ornamented with silver. This, and their crooked dagger or jambea, are their chief pride ; and it requires the most rigid economy for several years, to enable a young Arab to provide himself with them. The troops attend the dola every Friday to the great mosque, and afterwards exercise in the front of his house. I was present several times to see the infantry fire three volleys, which they do with ball-cartridge, or at least ought to do, though, I suspect, economy induces them frequently to leave out the ball. Before they fire, they throw themselves into



loose disorder ; a plan which the dola strongly justified to Mr Pringle, when he waited on him to announce the late glorious victories of the British in the east. On that occasion he fairly told him, that he was very much surprised our soldiers ever gained a victory, disciplined as they were: 'Why,' said he, 'your men are all drawn up in a row, so that any man may be distinguished by a person who has an enmity to him, and be shot immediately; whereas my men, by standing in disorder, and continually changing place, cannot be known.' The ball that they use is small and ill formed, so that, at the respectful distance they keep from each other, a wound is seldom received. As the chief Mussulmaun inhabitants attend the dola on the Friday, as well as the soldiers, the procession is handsome, several gay streamers being carried by the horsemen, and, before the dola, the green and red flags of the Imaum: on the former of these is figured, in white, the double-bladed sword of Mohammed, which has a much greater resemblance to the figure of a European, with his head, feet, and hands cut off. The Arab dress looks well on horseback, and is composed of the richest satins and kincaubs of India. The flowing scarf, and the turban with the ends hanging low on the back, add greatly to the elegance of the dress.'

The Author of Scenes and Impressions thus describes the procession: 'The dowlah rode a beautiful little iron-gray, and was accompanied by about half a dozen persons, well dressed, and of some condition, and the like number of attendants, mounted on wretched horses, and meanly clothed. A large band of that regular Arab infantry which forms the garrison, followed: their costume is plain; a common blue shirt, small dark turbans, a rude body-belt for their cartridges, and a priming-horn. They marched in a wide front, their matchlocks sloped upon their shoulders, their free hands grasping the fore-arms of

their comrades, and they sang in loud chorus some war-song of their country. When the dowlah bridled up at the gateway of his residence, these men ranged themselves on one side of the square, their rear rank considerably behind their front, and fired three volleys in the air, retiring every time to the wall to load. The dowlah now indulged us with a little exhibition of his own horsemanship and address with the lance. He encountered three of his suite in succession, engaging them in a manner quiet, even to tameness. It is not, however, unpleasing to mark, in how *very small* a space the combatants will circle; to see the lances lightly poised, with the points dropped low, and close to each other; to see the eye steadily fixed, and, at times, the sudden turn of the steed, and lifting of the lance; and to mark the feint, the ready recovery, the close following up, and then the circling as before.

‘The variety in their costumes, for there were not two robes of a colour, and the ease with which they seemed to move in these loose garments, now filling with, now flying from the wind, gave a grace and animation to the picture; but one trifling circumstance added to the scene, in my eye, a very peculiar charm. Two of the horses had frontlets, or regular head-armour\* of polished steel. Now there can be little doubt that these were old hair-looms, fashioned long centuries ago; and without any great stretch of the imagination, we may suppose them to have glittered in the van of Arabian armies, and given bright warning of the battle hour to the Templar and the Hospitaller, as they looked forth from the tall battlement, reposed in the open camp, or rode “aye ready for the field” on the scorched plains of Palestine.’

\* Thick plates of steel covering the head in its length and breadth, and standing well out from the skin, to prevent a jar or bruise.

Without the walls of the town are three extensive suburbs; one occupied by common Arab labourers; one by the *Samaulies* (Abyssinian mariners)\* and Mohammedan traders; and one by the Jews, who carry on an extensive illicit trade in a brandy distilled from the date-tree, which is drank by the Mussulmauns in private. 'The hot and haughty Mussulmaun stealing to the poor dwelling of the cold and self-denying Jew, to break his Prophet's law, and show himself the slave of a sin so mean, furnishes to the mind no common picture.' These villages are not more cleanly than the town; and the gully in which the river of Moosa has occasionally reached the sea, is filled with the accumulation of filth, which, in a more moist country, would certainly breed a pestilence, though here it has no ill effect.

'The Arabs,' says Lord Valentia, 'are in general a healthy race of people, fevers being very unusual, though severe colds are common during the cooler months. Ulcers are so prevalent, that it is rare to see a person without a mark from them on the legs: this is chiefly owing to their bad treatment; they only apply a piece of wax to the wound, which is never changed till it falls off. Cleanliness is indeed no quality of an Arab, either in his person or habitation. The part of the dress which is concealed, is rarely changed till it is worn out; and it was a work of the greatest difficulty, to force the servants to keep even the British factory free from accumulations of nuisances in every part. The form is gone through every morning, of sweeping a path across the square from the dola's house to his stables; yet, at the

\* In person these *Samaulies* are neither negroes nor Arabs: they have woolly hair, but not flat noses, well-formed limbs, a dark skin, beautifully white teeth, and an expression of countenance 'neither fierce nor unpleasing.' They detest the Arabs.

same time, a dunghill is formed under his windows by the filth thrown out from his Zenana, so extremely offensive as often to induce the Europeans to take a circuit to avoid it.

‘The Arabs when very young, have an expressive, but mild countenance, and a pleasing eye. As they become men, the change is very disadvantageous : their figures are not good, and the beard is generally scanty; but, in advanced age, their appearance is truly venerable. The fine dark eye is then admirably contrasted with the long white beard, and the loose drapery prevents the meagre figure from being observed. The few women who were visible, had rather pretty countenances, but, in contrast to the males, their legs were of an astonishing thickness.

‘The food of the Arabians of inferior rank is a coarse grain raised in the country, juwarry, ghee, dates, and, on the sea-coast, fish, which is procurable in any quantity, with very little trouble. The higher orders occasionally had some mutton or beef, boiled to rags, and, on festivals, a little pilau. The cawa, made from the husk of the coffee-berry, is drank by most of them several times a day, and the pipe is rarely out of the hands of the men. At the factory, a very excellent table was kept by Mr Pringle. The beef and mutton, which are procured from the coast of Berbera, and particularly from Zeila, where the Imaum has a garrison, are excellent. Poultry is in great abundance, and cheap. Sweet potatoes, chilies, onions, and water-melons, are cultivated in the small gardens without the town, wherever water is procurable from wells.’

‘The Arabs in general seem to care very little about their religion. Friday is no otherwise distinguished, than by the flag of the Imaum being hoisted on the forts, and the troops being paraded in the square, while the lower orders carry on their usual occupa-

tions. Money will at any time induce an Arab to waive his prejudices. A longer residence among the Arabs settled in towns, has only increased the dislike and contempt with which I behold them. They have all the vices of civilised society, without having quitted those of a savage state. Scarcely possessed of a single good quality, they believe themselves superior to every other nation; and, though inveterate cowards, they are cruel and revengeful. Superstitious followers of Mohammed, they do not obey one moral precept of the Koran; and though they perform the prescribed ablutions with strict regularity, yet I never heard of a vice, natural or unnatural, which they do not practise and avow; and, though they pray at regulated times to the Deity, yet, they also address their prayers to more saints than are to be found in the Romish calendar. Hypocrisy and deceit are so natural to them, that they prefer telling a lie to speaking the truth, even when not urged to do so by any motive of interest. To this they are trained from their youth, and it forms a principal part of their education. As a government, they are extortioners and tyrants; as traders, they are fraudulent and corrupt; as individuals, they are sunk into the lowest state of ignorance and debauchery; and, in short, require to be civilised, more than the inhabitants of the South Seas. The difference between this character of the Arabs, and that given by Mr Niebuhr, may at first sight appear extraordinary; but the difference is more in appearance than reality, as it is evident that he takes his opinion from the reception he had met with among the wandering tribes.

‘I am perfectly ready to concur with him in his character of the wandering tribes, who, I believe, are less civilised and have fewer vices. The virtue of hospitality, so necessary in the barren deserts which they occupy, is completely theirs; and their bravery and strict sense of honour elevate them far above



their countrymen who reside in cities. The Arabs have essentially altered their conduct towards Christians, who may now walk about the streets of their towns without being liable to insult. The different events which have taken place in India, and have so conspicuously elevated the Cross above the Crescent, have struck a panic to the heart of the Mussulmaun throughout the East. It cannot be supposed that he beholds the change without repining; but it has forced upon his mind a conviction of the superior power of the Christian, whom he hates as he ever did, but now fears instead of despising. A disgraceful prohibition ought to be removed: a Christian is not permitted to go out at the Mekka gate, although the Jews and Banians are. This is the more singular, as the latter two classes are considered by the Mussulmauns as inferior to the former.'

The Jew is looked upon with an evil eye at Mocha: 'the Arab may spit upon and strike them,' and they are not allowed to wear a turban.' Many of them gain a livelihood by working as goldsmiths and jewelers. They have a synagogue, built of mud, small and mean, in which a little cluster of this everywhere oppressed and shrinking race, the remnant of Judah, still listen to their law, and keep up the worship of their fathers.

The government of Mocha is one of the best in the gift of the Imaum, owing to the large sums which the dowlah is able to squeeze from the Banians and foreign traders. 'Formerly,' says Lord Valentia, 'an Arab of high rank was appointed to this office; but now that the authority of the sovereign is greatly weakened, it has been considered as more prudent to give the situation to a slave,\* who can

\* 'Nothing is more striking in the character of slavery among the Arabs, Turks, and other Asiatics, than that it is a very common road to places of trust, dignity, and power. How very different might be the fortunes of two African boys, torn

always be removed, and from whom it is more safe to take the profits of his government. The shereef of Abou Arish is an instance of the danger of appointing an Arab of the Prophet's family, who are, in fact, an hereditary nobility, that still consider themselves as entitled to all power among the Mussulmauns. He was appointed to Loheia by the present Imaum, and no sooner reached his government, than he prepared to rebel, and, with very little difficulty, resisted all attempts to drive him out. He has now become a Wahhabee, and has perfectly secured his independence.' The dowlah of Mocha in 1823, was an Abyssinian black, who had been a slave in the family of the Imaum, and had risen by his good conduct. He is described as 'not at all striking in his figure and appearance, quiet and civil to the Europeans, and not oppressive to the people.' Lord Valentia, however, styles him avaricious and tyrannical, and ascribes to him the invention of 'a new method of extorting money from the Banians, by confining them in a room, and fumigating them with sulphur till they complied with his demands.' The second officer in the town is the *bas kateb*, or secretary of state, who is always an Arab, and is considered as a licensed spy over the dowlah. The third is the kadi, or judge; and these three compose the divan, in which the dowlah has only a vote. The kadi, at this time, was an upright and respectable man; and under his vigilant administration the police was strict, and the town peaceable and orderly. Any person found out of his house after the drums had announced the dowlah's retiring to rest, would be apprehended and imprisoned.

The climate of Mocha is extremely sultry,\* owing to its vicinity to the arid sands of Africa, 'over which

from the same savannah, and sold, one to the British colonies in the West, and the other marched across the desert to the slave-marts of the East!' — *Scenes and Impressions*, p. 30.

\* From 90° to 95° Fahr. in July.

the S. E. wind blows for so long a continuance, as not to be cooled in its short passage over the sea below the Straits of Babel Mandel. This monsoon,' the noble Traveller further remarks, 'continues above eight months in the year with such force, as frequently to render all communication between the vessels in the road and the shore impossible. For the three or four months that the opposite monsoon from the N. W. blows, the heat is much greater, and the airs are light. These winds extend only to Jibbel Teir; from which place to above Djidda, they may be considered as variable for the whole year, though the prevailing one is generally from the same point in which the monsoon blows in the lower part of the gulf. Above Cosseir, an extraordinary change takes place; from thence to Suez, the wind blows for rather more than eight months from the N. W. At Mocha, during the prevalence of the S. E. wind, a thick haze covers the opposite coast; but the moment the north-wester commences, the opposite mountains and islands gradually appear. The high land of Assab is visible from Mocha, although its distance was ascertained to be seventy miles, by a set of cross bearings taken from the island of Perim. This proves that there is a great degree of refraction in the atmosphere, of which indeed we had still more positive proof, by the appearance of several other headlands at the same time, and which we knew were much too low to be seen directly at the distance they actually were. A very singular phenomenon also occurred, which has been taken notice of by the ancients; — the sun set like a pillar of fire, having totally lost its usual round form — a splendored testimony in favour of Agatharchides, who says, the sun rose like a pillar of fire.

'The country in the vicinity of Mocha is more dreary than can well be conceived; to the foot of the mountains it is an arid sand, covered with a saline efflorescence, and producing in abundance the common

mimosa, and a species of salicornia, whose embrowned leaves and burnt appearance give little idea of vegetation. Near the town the date-trees are in profusion; but their stunted growth shows the difference between the soil of Arabia and the fertile plains of India. Even where a brackish well has given an opportunity of raising a few vegetables, the scene is still cheerless, from the fence of dried reeds, which is alone visible. Mr Salt, by the permission of the dola, paid a visit to Moosa, and intended to have gone on to Beit-el-Fakih, but was recalled in consequence of the disputes running high respecting the renegadoes. He describes the country, even there, as uninteresting, though the mountains were fine, and there were fields of grain, and other appearances of cultivation. This is owing to the river, which rises in the hills, and at one season is full of water, though it in general loses itself in the Tehama, without reaching the sea. Once, indeed, it found its way to Mocha, where it carried away a considerable part of the Jews' town, which is built in its usually unfrequented bed. Had Mocha not existed, and had a vessel by accident approached the coast at that time, the mariners might justly have reported, that a river of fresh water there emptied itself into the sea. Future navigators would have positively contradicted them; and they would have been accused as liars without having merited the title. I think it probable, that the accounts of the river Charles, above Djidda, and the river Frat opposite to it, have originated in a similar circumstance.

‘Mocha, according to some learned natives, was not in existence four hundred years ago; from which period we know nothing of it, till the discoveries and conquests of the Portuguese in India opened the Red Sea to the natives of Europe. The first entered it in 1513, under Don Alphonso Albuquerque, with an intention of uniting themselves to the Abyssinians against their common enemy the Mussulmauns, but



returned without having reaped any advantage. In 1538, Soolimaun Basha, commanding the fleet of the Soldan of Egypt, stopped at Mocha, on his return from his disgraceful expedition against Diu. It is only mentioned in his voyage as a castle, and was, therefore, probably a place of little importance, and had a Turk for its governor. In 1609, when the Red Sea was first visited by the English, under Alexander Sharpey, Mocha had greatly risen in importance, and had become the great mart for the trade between India and Egypt. The Turkish governor was, at this time, a man of prudence and liberality, so that the English traded without any injury; but his successor, in the following year, had very different ideas, as Sir Henry Middleton experienced to his cost, who was betrayed, and kept a prisoner for some time. These circumstances were too inimical to trade to admit of its continuance, and there was only a Dutch factory at Mocha, when Monsieur de la Merveille visited it in 1708, and established a factory for his countrymen. Between that period and 1738, the English must have arrived, as, according to Niebuhr, they were there when the French bombarded the town, and obliged the dola to pay his debts, and reduce the duties from three to two and a half per cent. Mocha was probably then at its highest state of prosperity, when the English, the French, and the Dutch, carried on a regular trade with it, and by means of the navigation round the Cape of Good Hope, the expense of the freight of coffee was much lessened, and the consumption of it in Europe began proportionably to increase.

‘Coffee is the only article of trade produced in Arabia, and formerly the whole of this was carried from Loheia, by dows, to Djidda, and thence, either by the caravan of pilgrims to Constantinople, or in large Turkish vessels by sea to Suez, and across



Egypt to Alexandria; whence it found its way to every part of Europe. As early, however, as the beginning of the last century, the large European vessels began to carry the coffee round the Cape of Good Hope, which so much reduced the duties in Egypt, that the Porte sent an embassy to Sanaa to complain of this new system of trade, and to request that no coffee might be exported except through Egypt. The average quantity that annually went up to Djidda was about sixteen thousand bales, till the year 1803, when a single American ship appeared, and, by the great profit of her voyage, induced so many others to follow her example, that the quantity sent to Egypt was reduced nearly one half.'

Independently of coffee, the export trade of Mocha is very considerable in gum-arabic, myrrh, and frankincense. These are imported from the Abyssinian coast, chiefly from Berbera, from which Arabia draws her supplies of *ghee*, and a great number of slaves, camels, horses, mules, and asses. The riches of Yemen, however, may be considered as solely owing to its coffee, from the sale of which its merchants receive the dollars in Egypt, with which they purchase the manufactures and species of India. Of late years, the Muscat traders, and French vessels under the Muscat flag, have considerably injured the trade. Arabia itself consumes only a small proportion of its imports: the residue, after paying a duty of three per cent on the import, and seven per cent on the export, is sent by dows to Massowah, Djidda, and Aden, for the fair of Berbera. Yemen has probably reached its greatest prosperity, and may indeed be considered as on the decline. The coffee country is gradually falling into the hands of the Shereef of Abou Arish, who has become a follower of Abdul Waheb, and has opened the port of Loheia for the exportation of coffee. The Sultaun of Aden also procures a small quantity, and will probably increase

his territories at the expense of the Imaum. His port is so far superior to any other in Arabia, that I cannot but believe it will soon become the mart for all that is exported, except to Suez. The rise of Mocha has been owing to accidental circumstances which now no longer operate, and its trade will probably remove to Loheia and Aden.' 'I do not know whether it be of much consequence, as Yemen is changing masters, that the Americans are spoiling the road of Mocha by throwing over their ballast. The evil has already become great, for there is now no clear spot, under four fathom, and at a great distance from the shore. In another season, not a ship will be able to anchor in safety.'

Mocha stands in lat.  $13^{\circ} 20'$  N., long.  $43^{\circ} 20'$  E. The population, which Lord Valentia estimates at 5000, amounted, at the beginning of the last century, according to the French voyager, to double that number, although not so large a city, he says, as Aden. About five hours from this town, in the road to Taas, is the village of Moosa,\* 'well known to Europeans, who sometimes come here,' Niebuhr says, 'on parties of pleasure.' It is situated just on the confines of the highlands, and is the residence of a sub-dowlah. The buildings are wretched, and the heat is as oppressive as at Mocha; but the water is good, and the richer inhabitants of that town send hither for it. In this country, it is worth a four hours' ride to taste such a luxury fresh from the spring. The French Traveller, to whom reference has been made, styles Moosa (which he makes to be about ten leagues from Mocha,) 'a small, pleasant country town.' 'They at Mocha,' he adds, 'are supplied with almost all their

\* 'As it is to be presumed,' says Niebuhr, 'that the waters of the Arabian Gulf have retired in this place, as elsewhere, there is reason to suppose, that we should here look for the port of Muza, mentioned by the Greek geographers, as well as by Moses, Gen. x, 30.' Our Version has Mesha.



VIEW OF MOOSA.

*From the Fort.*



fowls from hence; and hither is brought down all the fruit from the neighbouring mountains, in the way to other parts.' The houses here, as in the suburbs of Mocha, are, for the most part, circular huts, with walls of a tolerable height, and a conical or rounded top; they are built of a matting or thatch of the strong leaves of the date-palm, and have a neat, compact, and, when new, very pretty appearance. There are a few stone buildings.\*

#### FROM MOCHA TO SANAA.

The road to Taas lies, for some way, along the channel of the large river above alluded to, as disemboguing, in the rainy season, into the sea, but which is commonly lost, at no great distance from its head, in the sands of Tehama. On entering the hilly country, the roads are too bad for travelling by night. About forty miles from Mocha is the town of Dorebat, the capital of the territory of Ibn Aklan, seated on the summit of a mountain. At the foot of the hill, near the road, is the place where the *suk* or market is held. Here are a few houses, and a prison excavated in the rock, which has the name of being the most dreadful in all Yemen,—a sort of black hole, like that at Calcutta, into which neither the light of day nor the free air can penetrate. In front of this hole is the common prison, where Niebuhr saw a number of persons, who had been confined there for slight offences, seated before the open door, fastened together by a long chain. Early on the following day, (the fifth from Mocha) Niebuhr entered Taas.†

\* See plate.

† Speaking of this place under the name of *Tage*, the French Traveller says: 'This city is of great note in that coun-



This city, which has already been mentioned as occurring on the road from Djobla to Zebid, is situated at the foot of the fertile mountain of Sabber, on its northern side, in lat.  $13^{\circ} 34'$  N. It is surrounded with a wall from sixteen to thirty feet thick, and is flanked by several small towers. But the whole has only an exterior coating of bricks, and the interior is composed of mud. Within the walls rises a steep rock about 400 feet high, on which is built the citadel. The town has now but two gates, *Bab Sheikh Mousa* and *Bab el Kebir*, both constructed after the Arabian fashion, with three towers. There was a garrison of 600 men; but the place is not strong, being commanded by the neighbouring heights. There are several deserted and ruined mosques, evidently the work of Turkish architects. The principal mosque, 'the cathedral of Taas,' as Niebuhr styles it, is that of Ismäel Mülk (or Melek): under it are subterranean vaults, which serve as a powder-magazine. This royal saint, who is the patron of the city, is said to have been at one time king of the country, and his memory is famous among the Sunnites of Yemen; but no one is now permitted to approach his tomb, which has been walled round ever since the dead king thought proper to perform a very inconvenient miracle. Two beggars, it is said, asked alms of the dowlah of Taas, but one of them only obtained relief; on which, the other repaired to the tomb of Ismäel Mülk, to implore the saint's aid. Ismäel, who in his life time had been very charitable, stretched his hand out of the tomb, and gave the beggar a

try, large, and enclosed with handsome walls, which, they say, were built by the Turks, with a strong castle on a mountain commanding the town, which may be seen six leagues off. It has thirty large brass ordnance, and is generally the prison for state criminals.'

written order on the dowlah for one hundred crowns. Upon examining this order with the greatest care, it was found to be in the undoubted hand-writing of the late king, and sealed with his own seal. The dowlah could not, therefore, refuse to honour the draft, but, to avoid all subsequent trouble from such bills of exchange, he shut up the tomb. Near this mosque is a garden, said to have belonged to Ischia, the son of this king Ismäel, in which there is a large basin of water, together with some hydraulic works, which must have been highly ornamental; but all is now in a state of dilapidation. To the east of the city there is a magnificent mosque with two minarets, which have suffered in a siege; and on an eminence near it is another edifice not less superb, erected over the tomb of a personage named Afdal, supposed to have been a pasha of Taas. To the west of the city, outside of the wall, is the mosque of the celebrated saint Sheikh Moosa. There are remains of several palaces built by the lords of Taas. Since the last war, however, the town has been much injured, and part of it has been converted into fields. In the neighbourhood, there are remains of two ancient towns. One of these, called Oddena, situated on the summit of Mount Sabber, and supposed to have been the district capital before the tomb of Ismäel Mülk, at the foot of Mount Kabhr, drew round it the modern town.\* The other is called Thobad, and is situated about half a mile from Taas, near Mount Sabber. Some parts of the wall and a very spacious mosque still remain. Mount Sabber is said to abound with a rich variety of plants, promising an ample field to the botanist, but Niebuhr and his companions were not

\* Loheia, Beit el Fakih, and Mocha, owe their foundation, in like manner, to their respective saints, round whose tombs they have risen.

permitted to explore it. The surrounding country was found almost depopulated, in consequence of the recent civil wars and the exactions of the dowlah of Taas, who appears to have been a despicable petty tyrant.

Leaving Taas, Niebuhr reached, on the third day, Mount Mharras, beyond which he entered on the more fertile territory of Sheban. The next day, he reached Abb, a walled town on the summit of a mountain, containing several small mosques (two with minarets), and about 800 houses, most of them in a tolerable style of building. The streets are paved, and the town is supplied with water by an aqueduct. At a short distance, between Abb and Djobla, are two rivulets, one of which, running westward, falls into *Wady Zebid*; the other, running southward, takes the name of Meidam, and, in the rainy season, finds its way into the sea in the territory of Aden. The different course of these rivers, two of the most considerable in the country, seems to indicate that this is one of the most elevated spots in these mountainous regions. Descending Mount Abb by a good paved road, Niebuhr entered on an undulating country, having villages and *madjils* scattered over it. No remarkable place was seen, however, except Mechader, a small town on the side of a hill crowned with a castle, the residence of a dowlah. The sixth's day's journey led over Mount Sumara, which is much higher than Mount Mharras, and so steep that it would be impassable for camels, were it not for a paved road which winds up the most difficult part of the acclivity. Half way up is the village of Mensil, where is a superb *simsera*, built of hewn stone; lat. 14° 10' N. On the very peak of this desert mountain stands a ruined castle. The temperature here was found very keen, and Niebuhr suffered extremely from excessive thirst, and a cold caught by being too lightly clad. Between three and four

leagues from Mensil is Jerim (Yerim), a small town, the residence of a dowlah, who resides in the castle, which crowns a steep rock in the middle of the place. It is situated in lat.  $14^{\circ} 17'$ . At two miles' distance S. W. from Jerim, once stood, according to the tradition of the natives, the famous city of Dhafar, supposed by Niebuhr to be the site of Taphar, or Tephra, an ancient residence of the Hamyarite monarchs.\* The Arabs say, that Dhafar was the capital of a celebrated conqueror who reigned over the whole peninsula, named Sâoud el Kammel, and that the city was destroyed by the Abyssinians.† The Abyssinian invasion took place in the beginning of the sixth century. Very few traces of the city are said to remain; but Niebuhr was told, that a large stone still exists, with an inscription, which neither Jews nor Mohammedans were able to read. If any Hamyarine inscription shall ever be discovered, he remarks, it will probably be found among these ruins, which deserve to be investigated.

On the eastern side of Mount Sumara, the season had been so dry, (although it rained almost every day on the western side,) that the locusts had multiplied prodigiously. In a plain near Jerim, they might be taken by handfuls. Niebuhr saw a peasant with a sack full of them, which he was going to dry and lay up for winter provisions. In all the markets, they were sold at a very low price, in consequence of the excessive supply. He had seen the peasants of Mensil pursuing these insects, in order to preserve their fields from absolute desolation; but here, it would have been useless. At length a hail-storm followed by heavy showers, thinned their numbers, and put their legions to flight. In the market at Jerim, Niebuhr saw many tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and other

\* See p. 49.

† Probably Assaeid ul Tobba is referred to. See page 36.



artisans, seated behind low walls, and working at their craft in the open air. He saw also 'surgeons, who drew blood with a common knife, and dressed the wound with pieces of hartshorn.' He was one day entertained by two gladiators, who for a few pieces of small money, performed their feats in the streets. They wore masks, the first our Traveller had seen in the East, and were armed with a buckler and poinard. The perfection of their art consisted in leaping to the sound of a tambour, and in agile turns of the body.

At Jerim, the learned Traveller lost his friend and companion, M. Forskal, who sank under the illness produced by the fatigue of the journey and the effects of the climate. After performing the last sad rites, at midnight, and committing his remains to the plot of ground purchased for that purpose,\* Niebuhr and his surviving companions set out for Sanaa. The route lay along rugged roads and through a barren country, to Damar, a distance of six hours. This is a considerable town, the seat of a dowlah, who resides in a large castle. It stands in a fertile plain, is without walls, but contains no fewer than 5,000 houses, tolerably well built. The Jews live in a detached suburb; but the Banians are permitted to live among the Mussulmans. Here the Zeidites have a famous college, in which about five hundred young students are taught to read the Koran. To the E. of Damar is a

\* They had great difficulty in bribing six men to carry the corpse; so great is the aversion of these people to touch a Christian. Imprudently, they resolved to bury their deceased friend in a coffin, instead of following the Arabian mode, and wrapping the body simply in a sere-cloth. The consequence was, that after their departure, the coffin was broken open at night, on the suspicion of containing treasure, which, it was supposed, it might be the custom of Europeans to bury with their dead, and the grave-clothes were stolen. The dowlah obliged the Jews to re-inter the body, leaving them their coffin for their pains.



mountain, *Djebel Kiboud*, containing a mine of sulphur; and in another hill, called *Hirran*, to the N. W. of the town, are found the fine cornelians so much esteemed in Arabia, called by the natives *akib*. A small stream, at a short distance from Damar, flows northward, and loses itself in the sand in the country of Djof. Niebuhr supposes that it may be one of the rivers which supplied the grand reservoir of Mareb.\* Within a league of Damar is the small city of Mouab, or Mawahhib, formerly the usual residence of the imaum. It was here that the monarch held his court, whom the Author of the voyage published by M. La Roque visited in the beginning of the last century.† He thus describes the place: —

‘It is situated on the south side of a low mountain, and was built by the present king; and at the same distance of a quarter of a league, this prince has built a castle on a mountain higher than that on

\* See p. 27.

† The French deputation left Mocha on the 14th February, 1712, at four o’clock, P. M., and proceeded the first night to Moosa, which they reckon a distance of ten leagues; the second day, fifteen leagues to a small village called Manzery; the third day, to the city of Tage (‘Taas), ‘a journey of eighteen leagues through a fine even road;’ the fourth, six leagues to Manzuel, where are ‘two castles of great antiquity, in one of which their kings used formerly to reside in the time of their wars with the Turks.’ ‘From Manzuel, they undertook to go in two days to Yrame, at the distance of thirty leagues, passing through Gabala, a small city walled on one side only; its mosques being beautified with handsome towers or minarets: a son of the present king has the government of it.’ This is evidently the *Abb* of Niebuhr, as Yrame is Jerim, or Yerim. From Yerim, they proceeded fifteen leagues to Damar. Here, they say, ‘almost all the fatigue is over, and you now breathe again, for the country begins to open and extend itself into agreeable plains; and but a quarter of a league from Damar, is the city of Mouab. Thus, our deputies, by marching almost day and night, and often changing horses, arrived at length at Mouab on the eighth day, having gone above six-score miles in rough, troublesome ways, for the most part through mountains.’

which the city stands, to which he hath likewise given the name of Mouab, and which is a sort of country-seat, whither the king often retires for his diversion : so that Damar, Mouab, and the castle of the same name, make a triangle, and are equally distant from each other. Two leagues and a half from Mouab, the king hath also built a citadel on a hill, where he keeps a garrison of his best soldiers, with a numerous artillery. Hither he retires when he is at war with the princes his neighbours, or when he fears the approach of an enemy whom he is not strong enough to oppose.....The city is remarkable for nothing but its being the residence of the king ; for it is not large, and the walls are built of earth, as are most part of the houses. One of the suburbs is entirely taken up by the Jews, who are obliged to return thither every evening, not being permitted to lie in the city. The palace consists of two large wings, three stories high. The air at Mouab is very healthy, cool in the morning before sun-rise, and in the evening after sunset, but from nine to four excessively hot. The soil appeared in general good, all the plain being sowed with wheat and rice, and the hills and valleys planted with coffee-trees, many vines, and several sorts of fruit.'

The reigning monarch at this time is stated to have been a Turk by nation : he was an old man, eighty-seven years of age, of a complexion inclining to tawny, and an agreeable aspect. In his dress, he maintained the greatest simplicity, never wearing any other habit than a fine cloth of either a green or a yellow colour, without any ornament ; and the only mark of distinction was a kind of veil of white silk fastened to his turban, which, covering his head and falling down before, was tied under his chin, 'like our women's silk hoods.' 'It is not easy to conceive,' adds the writer, 'why this prince, having founded a new city, with a palace to reside in, not to

mention the castle not far from it, hath not built so much as one mosque, so that he is obliged to pray in the open field (under a pavilion or tent). This is a mystery our deputies were not able to dive into, and which proceeds, perhaps, from the great distrust of this Arabian prince, who, not satisfied with having secured himself behind a long chain of mountains, dares not venture his person in a temple, where he might possibly be surprised by his enemies, or betrayed by his subjects. Nor is this without example, since the famous Ali, the son-in-law of Mohammed, was assassinated in a mosque on a day of public devotion among the Mussulmauns.'

From Damar, the route becomes very rugged, and the country is marshy and uncultivated as far as Suradje, a distance of between six and seven leagues. The road thence lies for an hour over a mountain to Audi, a frontier village of the territory of Suradje, which here borders on the little province of Khaulan. At a short distance from this place is a village named Hod-dâfa, seated on a steep, insulated rock, where is said to be a curious inscription on an old wall, resembling neither the Arabic nor the Hebrew, and which Niebuhr suspects to be Hamyarine. After passing through several paltry villages, they reached Seijan, which, together with Suradje, belongs to the 'princes of the blood;' then, having crossed a mountain on which is situated the village of Rema, they passed, within a league and a half of Sanaa, a small river, over which is a stone bridge, — a rare thing in Arabia. The stream is lost, however, not far below, in the sand. On the 16th of July, the fourth day from Jerim, they entered the suburb of *Bir el Assab*,

## SANAA.

The city of Sanaa, which may be considered as at present the capital of Yemen, is situated at the foot

of a mountain called *Nikkum* (or *Lokkum*), on the summit of which are the ruins of an ancient castle, which the Arabs believe to have been erected by the patriarch Shem. It stands in lat.  $15^{\circ} 21'$ . A modern castle has been built on a hill called Chomdan, on the side of *Djebel Nikkum*, enclosing two palaces, called *Dar ed Dahhab*, and *Dar Amer*. There are some ruins here of old buildings ; but, notwithstanding the antiquity of the place, no inscription, either Kufic or Hamyarine. An old German mortar unexpectedly presented itself, bearing this inscription : *Jorg Selos Gosmich*, 1513. On the same battery were seen seven iron cannons, partly buried in the sand, and partly mounted upon broken carriages ; and these, with six others near the gates, which are fired on festival days, were all the artillery of the capital of Yemen. In the castle is the mint, together with a range of prisons for persons of different ranks. Several princes of the blood reside in the castle, but the imaum resides in the city.

Sanaa has, from its size, the appearance of being more populous than it really is, for gardens occupy a part of the space within the walls. It has seven gates ; four large ones, called, *Bab el Yemen*, *Bab es Sabbah*, *Bab Shaub*, and *Bab es Straun* ; (the latter, which leads to the castle, is but seldom opened ; ) and three smaller ones, called, *Bab Sharâra*, *Bab Hadid*, and *Bab Sogair*. There are a number of mosques : the principal one, *El Djamea*, has two minarets, the rest have but one. Some of these have been erected by Turkish pashas. There are not more than twelve large public baths, but several noble palaces, built in the Arabian style : three of these, *Bustan es Sultaun*, *Dar el Nasr*, and *Dar Fatch*, had been erected by the reigning imaum. 'These palaces, it is true,' says Niebuhr, 'are not in the European taste, but they are, nevertheless, constructed with burnt bricks, and sometimes even hewn stones have been employed ;



whereas the houses of the common people are of sun-dried bricks. I saw no glass windows, except in one palace near the citadel. The other houses have merely shutters, which are closed when it rains; and the house is then lighted by a round wicket, fitted with a piece of muscovy glass: some of the principal inhabitants have, in their country-houses, small panes of stained glass brought from Venice. In this city, as in most others in the East, there are large *simseras* or caravanseras for merchants and travellers; also, separate bazaars for wood, coal, iron, grapes, corn, butter, salt, and bread: in the bread market, women only are to be seen. There is also to be found at Sanaa a market where you may barter old clothes for new. The other traders, that is to say, all who traffic in the merchandise of India, Persia, Turkey, and other countries, as well as those who trade in all sorts of spices and drugs, the dealers in *kaad*-leaves, the fruiterers, carpenters, smiths, shoemakers, saddlers, tailors, stone-cutters, goldsmiths, barbers, cooks, book-binders, and writers or scribes,\* — have all, during the day, their respective stands in the open street, with their little portable shops. Timber is generally dear throughout Yemen, and fire-wood is not less so at Sanaa, all the hills near the city being bleak and bare,

\* These writers go about with their desks, and draw up petitions, copy-books, or teach writing. ‘Here’ (at Djidda), says the Author of Scenes and Impressions, ‘I first saw the *true scribe*, — well robed, and dressed in turban, trowsers, and soft slippers, like one of rank among the people. His inkstand with its pen-case has the look of some weapon, and is worn like a dagger in the folds of the sash: it is of silver or brass — this was of silver. When summoned to use it, he takes some paper out of his bosom, cuts it into shape with scissors, then writes his letter by dictation, presents it for approval; it is tossed back to him with a haughty and careless air, and the ring is drawn off and passed or thrown to him, to affix the seal. He does every thing on his knees, which are tucked up to serve him as a desk.’



so that wood is brought from the distance of three days' journey, and a camel's load costs two crowns. This scarcity of wood fuel, however, is partially supplied by a little pit coal. I have even seen peat burned here, but it was so bad as to require to be mixed with straw, to make it burn.

'Fruits are very plentiful at Sanaa. Here are more than twenty different species of grapes, which, as they do not all ripen at the same time, continue to afford a delicious refreshment for several months. The Arabs likewise preserve grapes by hanging them up in their cellars, and eat them almost through the whole year. The Jews make a little wine, and might make more, if the Arabs were not such enemies to strong liquors. A Jew convicted of conveying wine into an Arab's house, is severely punished; nay, the Jews must use great caution in buying and selling it among themselves. Great quantities of grapes are dried here; and the exportation of raisins from Sanaa is considerable. One sort of these grapes is without stones, and contains only a soft grain, not perceptible in eating the raisin.

'Jews are not permitted to live in the city. They live by themselves in a village named *Kaa el Ihud*, in the suburb of *Bir el Assah*. Their number amounts to 2,000. They are treated, in Yemen, more contemptuously than in Turkey; yet, the best artisans in Arabia are Jews, especially potters and goldsmiths, who come to the city to work in their little shops by day, and in the evening retire to their village. These Jews carry on a considerable trade. One of the most eminent merchants among them, named Oraki, gained the favour of two successive imâms, and was for thirteen years, in the reign of El Mansor, and for fifteen years under the present imâm, comptroller of the customs and of the royal buildings and gardens, — one of the most honourable offices of the court of Sanaa. Two years before our arrival, he had fallen

into disgrace, and was not only imprisoned, but fined 50,000 crowns. Fifteen days before we arrived at Sanaa, the imâm had set him at liberty. He was a venerable man, of great knowledge; and although he had received the imâm's permission, had never chosen to assume any other dress than that commonly worn by his countrymen. The young Jew who had been our servant, was one of his relations, and had mentioned us so favourably to him, that he desired to see us. But we durst not hold frequent intercourse with a man so newly released from prison. The disgrace of Oraki had drawn a degree of persecution upon the rest of the Jews. At that period, the Government ordered the demolition of fourteen synagogues which the Jews had at Sanaa. In their village are as handsome houses as the best in the city. Of these houses, all above the height of fourteen fathoms were demolished, and the Jews were forbidden to raise any of their buildings above that height in future. All the stone pitchers in which they had used to keep their wines, were broken. In short, the poor Jews suffered mortifications of all sorts.

‘The Banians in Sanaa, who are reckoned to be about 125, pay 300 crowns a month for permission to live in the city, whereas the numerous Jewish population of *Kaa el Ihud* pay only 125 crowns a month. The heirs of a deceased Banian are obliged to pay from 40 to 50 crowns: if he should leave no near relations in Yemen, his whole property devolves to the imâm. The Banians told us, that two men of their nation had been dragged to prison two months before; and ere they could obtain their liberty, were forced to yield up 1,500 crowns of an inheritance which had fallen to them in India, and of which they had touched no part in Arabia.

‘The suburb of *Bir el Assah* nearly adjoins the city upon the east side. The houses of this village are scattered through the gardens along the bank of a

small river. Two leagues northward from Sanaa, is a plain named Rodda, which is overspread with gardens, and watered by a number of rivulets. This place bears a great resemblance to the neighbourhood of Damascus. But Sanaa, which some ancient authors compare to Damascus, stands on a rising ground, with nothing like florid vegetation about it. After long rains, indeed, a small rivulet runs through the city; but, through the rest of the year, all the ground is dry. However, by aqueducts from Mount Nikkum, the town and castle of Sanaa are at all times supplied with abundance of excellent fresh water.'

On the third day after his arrival, Niebuhr was admitted to an audience of the imaum. The hall of audience was a very spacious square chamber, with an arched roof, and in the centre was a large basin, with some *jets d'eau* rising fourteen feet in height. Behind the basin, and near the throne, were two large benches, each a foot and a half high. Upon the throne, which was covered with silk stuffs, were placed large cushions, between two of which the imaum sat in the eastern fashion. He was dressed in a bright green robe with large sleeves; on each side of his breast was a rich filleting of gold lace, and on his head he wore a large white turban. His sons sat on his right hand, and his brothers on his left; opposite to them, on the higher of the two benches, sat the vizier; on the lower were placed the European travellers; and many of the principal men about the court were ranged on each side of the hall. Our Traveller was first led up to the imaum, and was permitted, as a mark of extraordinary favour, to kiss both the back and the palm of his hand, as well as the hem of his robe; while a herald proclaimed, 'God preserve the Imaum,' which was repeated by all present. The Arabic spoken at the court of Sanaa, was found greatly to differ from that of Tehama, which Niebuhr alone could speak, so that the conversation was necessarily carried on by interpreters: it

was neither very long nor very interesting, but the reception was most gracious. On their return to their quarters, the imaum sent each of the party a purse of small coin, in value about three crowns. Niebuhr subsequently saw this Arabian sovereign return in state from the mosque, when, besides the princes of the blood, there were in the procession at least 600 noblemen, ecclesiastics, and officers civil and military, all superbly mounted, and a vast crowd followed on foot. On each side of the imaum was borne a standard, having upon it a small silver box filled with amulets, whose efficacy was imagined to render him invincible; and over his head, as well as over the princes, were borne large parasols,\* — a distinction peculiar to the blood royal. The procession was magnificent but disorderly: the riders paced or galloped at pleasure, and the soldiers fired a few rounds with true Arabian awkwardness.

On his departure, Niebuhr, as well as his companion, received from the imaum, a complete suit of clothes, together with an order on the dowlah of Mocha for 200 crowns, as a farewell present. The dress was exactly like that which is worn by the Arabs of distinction throughout Yemen, consisting of a shirt, worn over wide drawers of cotton cloth, and a vest with straight sleeves, covered with a flowing gown. The *jambaa*, a sort of crooked cutlass, hangs by a broad girdle, and on the foot are half-boots or slippers without hose. The turban is very large, and falling down, floats over the shoulders.

This was in 1763. Since that time, many political changes have taken place in Yemen, and this ancient

\* Rather, a canopy. That borne over the monarch visited by the French traveller, was of green damask, with a trimming of red silk eight inches deep, enriched with gold lace, and on the top was a globe of silver gilt surmounted by a pyramid of the same.

monarchy seems fast waning to its close. The state of things at the beginning of the present century is thus described by Lord Valentia.

‘The imaum is at least seventy-eight years old, and fast approaching to dotage; he will not hear of any danger, and endeavours still to amuse himself in his sooty harem of 400 Abyssinian slaves. The vizier attaches himself to the party of Abdallah, though, before the imaum, he treats the brothers with equal respect. As the powers of the old man decay, their hostilities become more open, and the Hadje Abdallah informed me, that, during his residence at Sanaa, they actually drew their jambeas on each other, in their father’s presence, but were separated by the vizier. If, while disputing about the succession, they do not exert themselves to raise a force sufficient to resist the Wahabees, they will have no kingdom to succeed to. The whole disposable force of Yemen did not then exceed 600 horse, and 3,000 foot; not a tenth part of the force that their enterprising enemy could bring against them.’

From Sanaa, Niebuhr returned, by way of Beit el Fakih and Zebid, to Mocha, where he embarked for Bombay. Here, therefore, we must take leave of the learned Traveller, which we do with the more reluctance; as no European has hitherto followed up his researches in the interior of this remarkable country. All to the eastward and northward of Sanaa, the territories of Sahaun, Djof, and Yafa, the whole of Hadramaut and El Nedjed, and the greater part of Omaun and Laehsa, are *terra incognita*. A recent Traveller,\* indeed, has furnished some interesting and important information respecting the dominions of the Imaum of Muscat, and the shores of the Persian

\* Narrative of a Journey into Khorasan. By James B. Fraser. 4to. 1825.



Gulf, which might with propriety be introduced in this place. The narrow limits, however, within which the remainder of this description of Arabia must be comprised, compel us to reserve it for another place, in connexion with the countries comprised in the vast basin of the Euphrates, and which, though politically disunited, are both historically and morally connected with Arabia. A few particulars are subjoined, as serving to render more complete the account of the southern coast.

Mr Fraser sailed from Bombay, on the 14th of May, 1821, and, on the 5th of July, made *Raus ul Hud*, (or *Rîs el Hhad*,) vulgarly called Rasselgate, which literally means *Land's-end*. 'Very dark weather added to the majesty of the mountains that lie near this promontory, and which are generally mistaken for the Cape itself; the true Cape, however, is comparatively low, and runs much further out to sea. The whole coast is a rocky wall; the mountains of brown and bare rock, streaked with light gray veins and patches, rise in several ranges, one behind the other. The little town of *Raus ul Hud* lies on a small piece of beach, just round the Cape, with a good many date-trees about it, and two castles may be seen, built by the Imaum of Muscat, as a protection against the Wahhabees. The whole looks as dismal and barren as can be: not a blade of grass, or green thing, except the date-trees above mentioned, can any where be detected. It is remarkable, that, on rounding this cape, the south-west trade-wind constantly fails; the heavy sea it occasions, is exchanged for still water; and light baffling airs succeed, which render the remainder of the voyage to Muscat tedious and uncertain. The whole Arabian coast in this quarter, wears the same sterile aspect, offering, in many places, a precipitous, rocky belt towards the sea, alongside which ships might float unharmed. These rocks, entirely denuded of soil

or vegetation, exhibit their external strata crumbled into fragments, which partly adhere, partly lie loose on their surfaces, offering to the mind a remarkable image of ruin and desolation. Several ranges of mountains may be seen from the sea; but none, so far as we could judge, exceeded the height of fifteen hundred feet, and most of them were far below it. The province of Omaun extends from Abouthubee (vulgarly called Boothbee), in the Persian Gulf, to the island Masseur, south of *Raus ul Hudd*. Its produce is confined almost exclusively to dates and wheat.' The climate, particularly that of the cove of Muscat, is very unfavourable to the European constitution; and Mr Fraser suffered not less from the suffocating heat of the nights, than from the fiery heat of day, when the thermometer varied from 92° to 102° of Fahrenheit. The traders here are chiefly Hindoos; and Muscat reminded him, at first, of a very wretched Indian town; but no Indian scene, he says, ever presented the aspect of sterility with which that town is surrounded.

To judge of the Arab and his country, however, one must climb the mountains, and visit the oases of the desert. It is not at Djidda, Mocha, or Muscat, among the mixed and motley population of the sea-ports, — nor even at Mekka, that a fair estimate can be formed of his character; but among the independent sheikhs whose territories have never yet been violated by the Ottoman, the saladins and shereefs of the mountains, the Wahhabees and the Bedoweens.

It remains to notice one of the most singular spots in all Arabia, or indeed in the eastern world, — the ancient capital of Arabia Petræa, which has but recently been brought to light, after being as affectually hidden in its solitude, from European eyes at least, for a series of ages, as the palace of Shedad and the paradise of Irem in the deserts of Aden.

## PETRA.

It is the general opinion, Burckhardt says, among the clergy of Jerusalem, that the ancient Petra was at Kerek, two days' journey south of Szalt. This place is, accordingly, the see of the Greek Bishop of *Battrā* (Πετρας), who generally resides at Jerusalem; a proof how little stress is to be laid on the traditional information to be derived from such quarters. Kerek may perhaps be considered as at present the frontier town of Syria and Arabia, in this direction.\* Its inhabitants consisted, at the time of Burckhardt's visit, in 1812, of about 400 Turkish, and 150 Christian families: the latter are chiefly descendants of refugees from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Beit Djade. Four years before, the people of Kerek had, nominally, become Wahhabees, but they had never paid full tribute to Ibn Sâoud; and his sovereignty in this direction was little more than nominal. He had conferred on the Sheikh of Kerek the title of Emir of all the Bedoweens south of Damascus, to the Red Sea; but the Howeytat Arabs are in possession of the country south of Kerek, and the '*Kerekein*,' themselves deem it expedient to pay tribute to them. Tafyle, in the district of Djebal (*Gebalene*), about four days' further south, has, indeed, the character of a Syrian town, but the Howeytat govern the whole of this district. At the village Beszeyra, two hours and three quarters further,

\* The pashalik of Damascus extends as far southward as *Tor Hesma*, a high mountain, within one day's journey of Akaba, comprising the entire districts of Djebel and Shera, and consequently including Wady Mousa and Petra itself; but the Syrian viceroy has little authority in these parts, and Djezzar is the only pasha who has been able to exact the land-tax from the Arabs of Wady Mousa. — See BURCKHARDT, p. 433.) This territory belongs, in the strictest sense, to Arabia.

the women are seen wearing the *berkoa*, or Egyptian veil: and this change of costume is not the only indication that the traveller is entering upon the territory of a different race from the Syrian Bedoweens. The Howeytat, who occupy the whole of *Djebel Shera*\* from *Wady Ghoeyr* to *Akaba el Masri*, are the carriers of the Egyptian hadji caravan, as the Aenese Bedoweens are of the Syrian hadji. They resemble the Egyptians in their features, which are much less regular than those of the northern Bedoweens, especially the Aenese; they are much leaner and taller also than the northern Arabs; the skin of many of them is almost black; and their women, though tall and well made, are disfigured by broad cheek-bones.

The principal place in *Djebel Shera* is Shobak,† called also Kerek el Shobak, which has been a considerable town. It is situated about an hour to the south of the Ghoeyr, upon the top of a hill in the midst of low mountains. At the foot of the hill are two springs, surrounded by gardens and olive-plantations. The castle, of Saracen construction, is one of the largest to the south of Damascus, but is not so solidly built as that of Kerek. The greater part of the wall and several of the bastions and towers are still entire. The ruins of a well-built vaulted church are now transformed into a *medhafe* or public inn. Upon the architraves of several gates, Burckhardt noticed mystical symbols characteristic of the ecclesiastical architecture of the lower empire; and the tower of the castle has several Arabic inscriptions, in which may be distinguished the name of Melek el Dhaher. Mr Banks found, in the architrave of the principal door, an imperfect Latin inscription, of which he made so much out as to leave no doubt that it was a work of one of the Frank Kings of Jerusalem;

\* Evidently the Mount Seir or Shehir of Scripture. See p. 198.

† This name occurs Neh. x, 24.

and it is suggested that this might be *Mons Regalis*, one of their strong-holds in this direction.\* Within the area of the castle, about one hundred of the Mellahein Arabs had built their huts or pitched their tents: they cultivate the neighbouring grounds under the protection of the Howeytat. From the summit is a boundless view, comprising 'three dark volcanic eminences,' from which lava has evidently streamed, and formed a sort of island in the plain. The road from Shobak to Akaba, is tolerably good, and might, Burckhardt says, be rendered practicablc even for artillery;†

\* Irby and Mangles, p. 380. 'The Writer remarks, that the supposed church has the more the air of Mohammedan than of Christian architecture: the interior is in the pure Gothic style; the door-way is in the genuine Oriental taste.

† In the Description of Syria, vol. ii, p. 78, the Syrian Hadji route was given as far as the termination of the *Djebel Haouran*. 'The sixth day's journey is from *Kalaat el Zerka* to *Kalaat el Belka*, to the west of which the *Djebel Belka* terminates. Seventh day, to *Kalaat el Katrane*, which is also one day S. E. of Kerek. Eighth day, to *Kalaat el Hassa*, in a *wady* of the same name, running westward, which discharges its waters, in the rainy season, into the *Sheriat el Kebir* (Jordan). Ninth day, half a day's journey to *Kalaat Aeneze*. Tenth day, half a day's journey to Maan, where the *hadjis* rest two days. Eleventh day, to *Akeba Esshami*. Here, the elevated plain eastward of the *Djebel Shera*, terminates by a steep, rocky descent, at the bottom of which begins the desert of Nedjed, covered, for the most part, with flints. It is this upper plain, together with the mountains of Shera, Djebel, Kerek, and Belka, which formed, Burckhardt thinks, that natural division of the country to which the name of Arabia Petræa was applied. 'Though once thickly populous, it is now all a desert, and Maan is the only inhabited town. All the castles on the Syrian *hadji* route, from Fedhein to Medinah, are deserted.

From Akaba, the twelfth day's journey is to *Kalaat Medawara*. Thirteenth day, to *Dzat Hadji*, a castle surrounded with wells and palm-trees. Fourteenth day, at four hours, a difficult descent, called *El Araye* or *Kalaat Ammar*, leads from the sandy plain to a tract covered with white earth, extending to *Kalaat Tebouk*, where the *hadji* rests one day.



but he struck out of this road to the westward, to visit *Wady Mousa*, and the tomb of Aaron on Mount Hor.

Upon the summit of the mountain over which the road from Shobak passes, near the spot where it diverges from the great road to Akaba, are numerous small heaps of stones, indicating so many sacrifices to Haroun; the Arabs, who vow to slaughter a victim to Haroun, deeming it sufficient to proceed as far as this place, whence the dome of his tomb is visible, and after killing the animal, they throw a heap of stones over the blood which flows to the ground. *Ain Moosa\**

Fifteenth day, from Tebouk to *Kalaat Akhdar*. Sixteenth day, a very long march to *El Moadham*. Seventeenth day, to *Dar El Hamra*. Eighteenth, to *Medain Szaleh*, where are excavations and sculptured figures. Nineteenth day, to *El Olla*, a village of 250 houses, with a rivulet and orchards. The next three days, the halting places are merely wells, *Bir el Ghanam*, *Bir Zemeriod*, and *Bir Djedeide*. The twenty-third, to *Wady Hedye*, coming from Khaibar, which is four hours distant (see page 72): here the caravan remains two days, and the people often go to Khaibar to buy fresh provisions. Twenty-fourth, to *El Fahletein*, where apes and tigers are said to be met with, and where is an ancient building of black stones, called Stabel Antar. Twenty-fifth, to *Bir Naszeif*. Twenty-sixth, to Medinah.

From Medinah, there are two routes to Mekka. The eastern route is, 1. *El Khona*, a deep wady. 2. *El Dereybe*, a walled village. 3. *Sefyne*, a village. 4. *El Kobab*, wells. 5. *Bir el Hedjar*, wells. 6. *Set Zebeyde*, a ruined village. 7. *El Makrouka*, wells. 8. *Wady Leimoun*, a village and rivulet. 9. *Bir el Baghle*, wells. 10. Mekka.—The western road is, 1. *Bir Ali*, a village with gardens. 2. *El Shohada*, no water. 3. Djideida (see page 274). 4. Beder, the scene of Mohammed's famous victory (see p. 69): it contains upwards of 500 houses, with a rivulet. The Egyptian hadji here generally meets the Syrian. 5. *El Kaa*, no water. 6. *El Akdyd*, twenty-eight hours from Beder. 7. Rabagh (Arabok), a village. 8. *Khalyz*, a village and rivulet. 9. *El Szafan*, wells. 10. *Wady Fatima*, a village with rivulet and gardens. 11. Mekka.

\* Probably the same as Mosera, Deut. x, 6.

is a copious spring, rushing from under a rock at the eastern extremity of the wady. It is about seven hours from Shobak. There are no ruins near the spring, but, a little lower down, is a mill, and above it the deserted village of Badabde, formerly inhabited by Greek Christians, who retired to Kerek. Proceeding along the brook for above twenty minutes, the valley opens into a plain, about a quarter of an hour in length and ten minutes in breadth, in which the stream of *Ain Moosa* is joined by a mountain rivulet from the southward. Upon the declivity of the mountain, in the angle formed by their junction, stands Eldjy, the principal village of Wady Mousa, containing between 2 and 300 houses, enclosed with a stone wall, with three regular gates. It is inhabited by the Lyathene Arabs, part of whom encamp during the whole year in the neighbouring mountains. It is most picturesquely situated; the slopes of the mountain are formed into terraces covered with corn-fields and orchards, which are well irrigated by the two rivulets and numerous smaller springs; and a few large hewn stones and blocks of beautiful marble dispersed over the present town, indicate it to be the site of an ancient city. Pursuing the rivulet of Eldjy westward, the valley soon narrows again; and here a scene of wonder soon opens on the traveller, for the description of which we shall avail ourselves of the unpublished travels of Captains the Hon. C. L. Irby and James Mangles, who visited Wady Mousa, in company with Mr Banks and Mr Legh, in 1818.

‘Some hundred yards below the spring, begins the outskirts of the vast necropolis of Petra. Many doorways are visible, upon different levels, cut in the side of the mountain, which, toward this part, begins to assume a more rugged aspect. The most remarkable tombs stand near the road, which follows the course of the brook. The first of these is cut in a mass of whitish rock, which is in some measure insulated and

detached from the general range. The centre represents a square tower with pilasters at the corner, and with several successive bands of frieze and entablature above; two low wings project from it at right angles, and present each of them a recess in the manner of a portico, which consists of two columns, whose capitals have an affinity with the Doric order, between corresponding antæ; there are, however, no triglyphs above. Three sides of a square area are thus enclosed; the fourth has been shut in by a low wall and two colossal lions on each side; all much decayed. The interior has been a place of sepulture for several bodies.'

The taste which prevails in the decoration of most of the façades of these excavations, is fantastical in the extreme; they are loaded with ornaments, in the Roman manner, but in 'bad taste,' displaying an 'unmeaning richness and littleness of conception.' In one instance, upon a plain front without any other decoration than a single moulding, are set, in a recess, four tall and taper pyramids. The effect is singular and surprising, but combining too little with the rest of the elevation to be good. 'Our attention,' says Capt. M., 'was the more attracted by this monument, as it presents, perhaps, the only existing example of pyramids so applied, though we read of them as placed in a similar manner on the summit of the tombs of the Maccabees and of the Queen of Adiabene, both in the neighbouring province of Palestine.' As the sides of the valley become more precipitous and rugged, the large and lofty towers, which are represented in relief on the lower part of the precipice, are formed, higher up, by the rock being cut down on all sides. The greater number of them present themselves to the high road, but others stand back in the wild nooks and recesses of the mountain. Such quadrangular towers, Capt. Mangles remarks, were a fashionable form of sepulchre in several inland dis-

tricts of the East: they abound at Palmyra, and are seen in the valley of Jehoshaphat; but there, the details and ornaments betray an imitation of Roman architecture, while at Petra they bear the marks of a peculiar and indigenous style. 'Their sides have generally a slight degree of that inclination towards each other, which is one of the characteristics of Egyptian edifices; and they are crowned with the Egyptian torus and concave frieze.' Chateaubriand has remarked on the manifest alliance of the Egyptian and the Grecian taste in the tombs at Jerusalem. 'From this alliance resulted,' he says, 'a heterogeneous kind of monuments, forming, as it were, the link between the Pyramids and the Parthenon.'

Among this multitude of tombs, two only contained inscriptions: the characters of these, Mr Banks detected to be exactly similar to those which he had seen scratched on the rocks about the foot of Mount Sinai, and they are supposed to be some form of the Syriac. It was the eastern approach to Petra which the Travellers were pursuing. As they advanced, 'the natural features of the defile grew more and more imposing at every step, and the excavations and sculpture more frequent on both sides, till it presented at last a continued street of tombs, beyond which the rocks, gradually approaching each other, seemed all at once to close without any outlet. There is, however, one frightful chasm for the passage of the stream, which furnished, as it did anciently, the only avenue to Petra on this side. It is impossible to conceive any thing more awful or sublime than such an approach. The width is not more than just sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast; the sides are in all parts perpendicular, varying from four hundred to seven hundred feet in height; and they often overhang to such a degree, that, without their absolutely meeting, the sky is intercepted and com-



pletely shut out for one hundred yards together, and there is little more light than in a cavern. The screaming of the eagles, hawks, and owls, who were soaring above our heads in considerable numbers, seemingly annoyed at any one approaching their lonely habitation, added much to the singularity of this scene. The tamarisk, the wild fig, and the oleander, grow luxuriantly about the road, rendering the passages often difficult: in some places, they hang down most beautifully from the cliffs and crevices where they had taken root. The caper-plant was also in luxuriant growth, the continued shade furnishing them moisture.

‘Very near the entrance into this romantic pass, a bold arch is thrown across at a great height, connecting the opposite sides of the cliff. Whether this was part of an upper road upon the summit of the mountain, or whether it be a portion of an aqueduct, which seems less probable, we had no opportunity of examining; but, as the traveller passes under it, its appearance is most surprising, hanging thus above his head betwixt two rugged masses apparently inaccessible. The ravine, without changing much its general direction, presents so many elbows and windings in its course, that the eye can seldom penetrate forward beyond a few paces, and is often puzzled to distinguish in what direction the passage will open, so completely does it appear obstructed..... We followed this sort of half-subterranean passage for the space of nearly two miles, the sides increasing in height as the path continually descended, while the tops of the precipices retained their former level. Where they are at the highest, a beam of stronger light breaks in at the close of the dark perspective, and opens to view, half seen at first through the tall, narrow opening, columns, statues, and cornices of a light and finished taste, as if fresh from the chisel, without the tints or weather-stains of age, and executed in a stone of a pale rose



colour, which was warmed, at the moment we came in sight of them, with the full light of the morning sun. The dark green of the shrubs that grow in this perpetual shade, and the sombre appearance of the passage whence we were about to issue, formed a fine contrast with the glowing colour of this edifice. We know not with what to compare this scene: perhaps, there is nothing in the world that resembles it. Only a portion of a very extensive architectural elevation is seen at first; but it has been so contrived, that a statue with expanded wings, perhaps of Victory, just fills the centre of the aperture in front, which being closed below by the sides of the rock folding over each other, gives to the figure the appearance of being suspended in the air at a considerable height; the ruggedness of the cliffs below setting off the sculpture to the highest advantage. The rest of the design opened gradually as we advanced, till the narrow defile, which had continued thus far without any increase of breadth, spreads on both sides into an open area of a moderate size, whose sides are by nature inaccessible, and present the same awful and romantic features as the avenues which lead to it: this opening gives admission to a great body of light from the eastward. The position is one of the most beautiful that could be imagined for the front of a great temple, the richness and exquisite finish of whose decorations offer a most remarkable contrast to the savage scenery. No part is built, the whole being purely a work of excavation; and its minutest embellishments, wherever the hand of man has not purposely effaced them, are so perfect, that it may be doubted whether any work of the ancients, excepting, perhaps, some on the banks of the Nile, have come down to our time so little injured by the lapse of age. There is, in fact, scarcely a building of forty years' standing in England, so well preserved in the greater part of its architectural decorations.

‘ The area before the temple is about fifty yards in

width, and about three times as long. It terminates to the S. in a wild, precipitous cliff. The defile assumes, for about 300 yards, the same features which characterise the eastern approach, with an infinite variety of tombs, both Arabian and Roman, on either side. This pass conducts (in a N. W. direction) to the theatre: and here, the ruins of the city burst on the view in their full grandeur, shut in, on the opposite side by barren, craggy precipices, from which numerous ravines and valleys, like those we had passed, branch out in all directions.'

Those which they examined, were found to end precipitously; and there is no getting out of them, except, in one instance, by climbing the precipice.

'The sides of the mountains, covered with an endless variety of excavated tombs and private dwellings, presented altogether the most singular scene we have ever beheld; and we must despair of giving the reader an idea of the singular effect of rocks tinted with the most extraordinary hues, whose summits present to us nature in her most savage and romantic form, while their bases are worked out in all the symmetry and regularity of art, with colonnades, and pediments, and ranges of corridors adhering to the perpendicular surface.'

There can be no doubt that this extraordinary spot is, as Burckhardt supposed, the Petra of Pliny and Strabo, the capital of the Nabatæi;\* notwithstanding that the Greek Church has transferred the name of Battra, with its metropolitan honours, to Kerek, which Burckhardt concludes to be the Charax of Pliny. Thus, the very existence of the real Petra had been blotted out from memory. — One of the

\* 'The Nabatæi inhabit a city called Petra, in a hollow somewhat less than two miles in circumference, surrounded by inaccessible mountains, with a stream running through it. It is distant from the town of Gaza on the coast 600 miles, and from the Persian Gulf, 122.' — PLIN. lib. vi, c. 28.

most remarkable of the excavations has evidently served as a Christian church. Near an angle in the walls, is an 'inscription in red paint, recording the date of its consecration' — what date, or in what character, is not mentioned. Two days, from day-break to dusk, were spent by the Travellers upon these ruins; but they could not at that time half explore them. At a considerable distance, a temple was descried, larger apparently than that which fronts the eastern approach; they were unable to discover the path to it. There was enough, in short, to have employed the party four days more at least, but nothing could obtain from the Arabs a further respite. Burckhardt's survey was still more hasty, as he owed his safety to passing for a Moslem; in which character he did not scruple to sacrifice a goat to Haroun (Aaron), in sight of the Prophet's tomb, which overlooks the city. It serves to identify the site, that Josephus expressly mentions the place of Aaron's decease as near the metropolis of Arabia Petræa; and Eusebius says, that the tomb of Aaron was shown near Petra. The Travellers, therefore, could have no doubt that it was Mount Hor, whose rugged pinnacle towered up before them, adding another picturesque and interesting feature to this extraordinary scene. The supposed tomb, which is accessible only by means of a steep ascent, partly artificial — in some places, flights of rude steps or niches being formed in the rock — is enclosed in a small modern building, not differing from the general appearance of the tombs of Mohammedan saints. Here, a decrepid old sheikh had resided for forty years, occasionally enduring the fatigue of descending and re-ascending the mountain. Not aware that his visitors were Christians, he furnished them with a lamp of butter to explore the vault or grotto beneath. Towards the further end, lie two corresponding leaves of an iron grating, which formerly prevented all nearer approach to the tomb: these have been thrown down, and the Travellers advanced so far as

to touch the ragged pall which covers the hallowed spot. The tomb is patched together out of fragments of stone and marble. Rags and shreds of yarn, with glass beads and paras, have been left as votive offerings by the Arabs.

‘No where,’ says the Writer, ‘is the extraordinary colouring of these mountains more striking, than in the road to the Tomb of Aaron. The rock sometimes presented a deep, sometimes a paler blue, and sometimes was occasionally streaked with red, or shaded off to lilac or purple; sometimes, a salmon colour was veined in waved lines and circles with crimson and even scarlet, so as to resemble exactly the colour of raw meat; in other places, there are livid stripes of yellow or bright orange; and in some parts, all the different colours were ranged side by side in parallel strata; there are portions also with paler tints, and some quite white, but these last seem to be soft, and not good for preserving the sculpture. It is this wonderful variety of colours, observable throughout the whole range of mountains, that gives to Petra one of its most characteristic beauties; the façades of the tombs, tastefully as they are sculptured, owe much of their imposing appearance to this infinite diversity of hues in the stone.’

Such a scene might have furnished the Author of *Rasselas* with a fine model for his happy valley. The *Arabian Nights* scarcely afford a picture equal in richness to this fantastic city in the rocks, — the monument and mausolcum of a once mighty and now forgotten nation. Thus strikingly is the oracle fulfilled: ‘Edom shall be a desolation.’\*

\* Jer. xlix, 17.





